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John G. Talbot
1907

THE SIEGE
OF
THE PEKING LEGATIONS



THE SIEGE
OF THE
PEKING LEGATIONS

BEING THE DIARY

OF THE

REV. ROLAND ALLEN, M.A.


CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT REV. C. P. SCOTT, D.D., LORD BISHOP
IN NORTH CHINA; FOR FIVE YEARS ACTING CHAPLAIN
TO H.B.M.'S LEGATION IN PEKING

WITH MAPS AND PLANS

LONDON
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1901

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IN PIAM MEMORIAM
DESIDERATISSIMAE DOMINAE
FRANCISCAE EMILIAE SCOTT
SPEI IN ADVERGIS
LAETITIAE IN PROSPERIS
CONSILII IN OMNIBUS
ADIVTRICIS CONSTANTISSIMAE



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TO THE READER

THIS book does not profess to contain a history of the siege of the Foreign Legations in Peking. That is a work which awaits the pen of a later writer, when time has perhaps resolved some of the mysterious problems which at present obscure the action of the Chinese Government, when the collection and examination of documents has given opportunity for a lucid and coherent account of the causes, progress, and results of the siege, and for passing a calm and deliberate judgment upon them. I am not in a position to describe accurately or in detail the military operations or diplomatic tactics with which the opposing forces struggled one against the other. All that I have attempted to do is to give as true and clear an account as I can of the general course of events, and of the effect

which they produced upon the besieged community as reflected in our mind. I have tried to tell the story as accurately as possible, and have been at pains to correct any mistakes which I could discover by comparison of my own hasty work with the scanty accounts or despatches already made public, and have occasionally made use of such papers to explain what might otherwise have been obscure; but, since my main intention was to present a picture of the daily events and excitements and labours which employed or amused or depressed the community, I have been careful to preserve the colour and tone of my original diary, and, wherever possible, I have retained its exact wording and expression.

I have not attempted to draw any conclusions or to point any particular moral in detail. I leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the facts. Yet I confess that I have not written this book without an object. I sincerely hope that all those of my readers who agree with Sir Thomas Browne in the belief that 'there are in every man's life certain rubs, doublings, and wrenches, which pass a while under the effects of chance, but at last, well

examined, prove the mere hand of God,' will read in every page such striking proofs of the watchful care of God over His world as to stir them to high praise for His goodness, and to stronger and deeper faith in His all-wise government. I hope, too, that all who take an interest in the great problems of missionary enterprise in China will see here abundant proofs of the success of those missions in the past, and strong grounds for hope that they will make yet greater progress in the near future. Many faults may be found in the present methods by which missionaries seek to attain their object; many faults may be found in the character of the missionaries themselves and in the character of their converts; but nevertheless it is abundantly clear that the labours of the missionaries have gained a wonderful measure of success, and that their Chinese converts can and sometimes do display those virtues which are peculiar to the Christian saint and martyr.

Finally, in a diary of this nature it is impossible to recall all the countless instances of courage and endurance displayed by individuals. If, through ignorance or carelessness, I have failed to do justice

to any of those who shared the perils of the siege, I sincerely regret it.

For many kind suggestions and much pains spent in revising the proofs my best thanks are due to Deaconess J. M. Ransome, who shared with me the dangers and sorrows here narrated. The plans are not drawn to scale. They are simply rough sketches inserted to give the reader a general idea of the position.

R. A.

March, 1901.

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A SIEGE DIARY

PEKING, 1900

CHAPTER I

THE BOXERS : JANUARY 1 TO APRIL 28

THE society of Boxers first became widely known in England by the murder of the Rev. Sidney Brooks, of the Anglican Mission, on December 31, 1899 ; but for some months before that disaster it had been causing great anxiety to Europeans in China by its violent anti-foreign agitation. It was originally a semi-religious guild, founded in the reign of Chia Ch'ing (1796-1820) nominally to revive the worship of the ancient heroes, really to gather people together for mutual defence.

This object was sufficiently clear from the title which they adopted of I Ho Ch'uan, or Fist of Righteous Harmony, which implied that they were ready to support the cause of peace and righteousness, if necessary, by force. In that reign the society was condemned by Imperial edict ; and thereafter it

slumbered in oblivion for nearly a century, until it was roused into new vigour by the aggressive attitude of foreign nations and the semi-political propaganda of the Roman Catholic Church. During the last two or three years Chinese of all ranks and classes were alarmed by the territorial aggressions of the Powers and by the stories, which spread everywhere, of the tyrannical way in which the foreigners acted towards the natives in the places taken by them. They saw here, or thought they saw, the first signs of the partition of their country, the destruction of their liberties, the uprooting of their most cherished customs and beliefs, and the enforced adoption of habits and laws which were utterly strange and abhorrent to them; they saw in anticipation themselves, their wives and families, made the slaves of a foreign despotism. In the preaching of Christianity they saw the introduction of a doctrine which poisoned the hearts of their fellow-countrymen, and tended to make them the willing dupes and allies of the foreign invasion. They saw that the Roman Catholic bishops and priests began to assume the style of great mandarins, that they were supported in all their actions by the foreign Governments, that the Chinese who entered the Church became members of a powerful guild, against which it was impossible for the ordinary citizen to struggle. Whatever the cause, whoever chose to rank himself under

the banner of the Church was thenceforward the cherished friend of the invaders, sold to them body and soul, to do their work, to prepare the way for the coming slavery of the whole nation. He became a man apart from his fellows, owing obedience to other magistrates, other laws. In return for this service the foreign priests took him under their powerful protection and defended him in every cause. No matter whether he did good or evil, he ceased to be subject to the law and authority of the national Government. To sue him at law was to court destruction. No magistrate dared to condemn him, even for open breach of the common law. His new masters extended over him the ægis of the Church, and appealed for him to a foreign authority, before which no Chinese could plead. It was true that he was subject to judgment and punishment at the hands of the foreign priests if he sinned against another of the guild members ; but into that court no heathen could carry his plea, nor was there any hope of a fair hearing if he had thought of attempting such a thing. Cases were frequent and, in Chinese eyes, indisputable in which honest men had been compelled either to suffer in silence the wrongs inflicted by Christians, or had been deprived of justice in the law courts. The Chinese people could not be expected always to draw fine distinctions between different bodies of Christians. They could neither

know, nor understand if they did know, the refusal of the Anglican bishops to accept any official position,¹ nor the repeated resolutions passed by the Protestant missionaries, both English and American, against interference in lawsuits between Christians and heathen. To them all foreigners were Christians, and all Christians were to be judged by the actions of those whom they happened to meet. It is astonishing that they ever made any distinction. Yet it is true that the most furious attacks of the society were at first directed against the Roman Catholics, and that in their preachings and agitation the Boxers almost invariably used that title for Christians which in common speech is accepted as belonging exclusively to Roman Catholics.

With admirable adroitness the leaders of the society seized upon these two causes of common hatred, and proclaimed themselves the Heaven-designated deliverers of their country from the foreign yoke. In their indictment of the invaders they had a basis of truth, recognised and resented by every man, woman, and child to whom they addressed

¹ 'We have no wish to complicate our spiritual responsibilities by the assumption of political rights and duties such as have been conceded to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. But we cannot view without alarm, both on behalf of our own flock and the Chinese population generally, the rapidly growing interference of French and other Roman Catholic priests with the provincial and local government of China.'—*Resolution passed by Anglican Bishops in Conference, Shanghai, September 1, 1899.*

themselves, an irrefutable argument on which to rely in their appeal to the people to rise. Their proposal was to destroy the foreigner and all his works, to remove the poison which was stealing away the hearts of the people, to restore the old religion, the old freedom, the old habits of thought and life endeared to the people by the experience of centuries. And this they asserted that they were well able to do by the aid of those same gods whose deserted altars they were then to restore. They claimed that their crusade was based on no human design, but on a divine command, and would be supported by divine assistance. In proof of this claim they professed to work miracles, and actually performed strange feats which convinced the ignorant and astonished the more learned. They declared that this miraculous power was within the reach of every man who would join their ranks. Such an one could speedily learn the secret of rendering himself invulnerable, and of securing the power to overcome one hundred men. These claims were universally believed.

There was yet another cause which helped them in their crusade, even more powerfully than either terror of foreign aggression or hope of divine aid. It was hunger with idleness. There had been a long season of drought, and consequent scarcity. In the autumn of 1899 the ground was so dry that it was useless to

plant the crops. The Chinese instinctively believe that such natural calamities are due to some spiritual cause; they are the manifest signs of the wrath of heaven, a punishment sent to avenge some evil in the nation. The Boxer preachers did not fail to point the moral. They proclaimed that the present drought was due to the presence of foreigners and to the evil influence of the foreign doctrine. They added that the woes of the people were even a source of joy to the foreigners and to those tainted with their unholy religion, that the Christians in league with the foreign devils, and at their instigation, poisoned the wells in order to destroy that supply of water which they could not dry up. They promised their followers the plunder of the Christians as a means of present support, the favour of the gods as the assurance of abundance for the future. The common people everywhere believed these stories, and were doubly infuriated against the source of their woes. They flocked to the standards of the Boxers and enrolled themselves in great numbers as members of the society. In every village young men and even little children might be seen learning the characters of the Boxer spells or practising the exercises of their drill. It was not only the common folk and village ne'er-do-weels who sought in this crusade against the foreigners an escape from the miseries of famine and enforced idleness, the better-class

farmers shared their superstitious excitement. It was one of the most noteworthy features of this strange movement that the Boxers never seem to have forced themselves upon any village. They came by invitation, and in nearly every case the invitation of the local gentry and headmen of the villages.

The Governor of Shantung, Yü Hsien, was a man of bitterly anti-foreign spirit. He saw in this movement the germ of a great organisation which might be employed to wreak vengeance on his hated foes. He encouraged the Boxers in every way, supporting them with his great influence and praising their action as patriotic and religious. It was said that his own son was a leader in the society. The smaller local magistrates naturally followed his example, and the movement spread over the country like wildfire.

The natural consequence was that the plundering and maltreating of Christians became every-day incidents: riots broke out in all parts of North Shantung and South Chihli, and the country seemed in danger of experiencing a scourge which might rival that of the T'ai P'ings. In the early part of December 1899 the Chinese Government, seeing that the disturbed state of these provinces might force the Powers to threaten intervention, removed Yü Hsien from his post, but received him at the Court with special favour, and shortly afterwards sent him to Shansi to

carry out in that province the good work which he had begun in Shantung. In his room Yuan Shih K'ai was appointed Governor of Shantung, with orders to restrain the people from any premature outbreak. Yuan Shih K'ai was a man of ability and strength, who perceived that the Boxer movement, if allowed to proceed, would end in the ruin of his country. He interpreted his orders according to the letter, and it was owing to his firmness that Shantung remained peaceful when the Boxers in Chihli rose. But in December he had not yet been able to collect his forces or gain control over the province, and at the close of the year the outlook was exceedingly dark. Men of experience were full of the gravest misgivings, and prophesied that the country was on the eve of a great disaster.

On January 13 an edict was published, harmless enough at first sight, but which caused great excitement amongst the native Christians and foreigners in the capital. It simply urged the officials to be careful in dealing with the Societies to avoid confounding the innocent with the guilty; but that warning gave just the necessary excuse to the officials who favoured the anti-foreign movement to hold their hands and do nothing, and it was certainly intended to have that effect. Dr. Reid (a missionary of some experience who lived near the Anglican Mission) came over to discuss it with Bishop Scott, and took a

very grave view of the situation, declaring that we were on the verge of a serious outbreak against foreigners. In the afternoon an Italian priest who had been thirty years in Chi Nan Fu called to beg the Bishop to join him in trying to unite all Christian missionaries in China in taking common action in view of the terrible danger which he foresaw threatened the Church. Both these men pronounced the edict a distinct mark of encouragement given by the Throne to the anti-foreign and anti-Christian societies. We could not but feel anxious for the Christians in the country. The Boxers were gathering adherents on all sides; in fact, they were at our doors, and nothing was being done to check them.

J On January 24 we heard from the Anglican priest in charge at T'ai An Fu that the local magistrates were recommending the Christians to pay tribute to the rebels to save themselves from attack, and that the Prefect, when offering him an escort of soldiers to go a short journey, said that he *dare* not order his men to kill anyone in defending the foreigner. Even within the city of T'ai An a foreigner could not walk the streets without hearing cries of 'Kill him, kill him!' At P'ing Yin, a district city not far off, in answer to an appeal from one of the Anglican missionaries, the magistrate said that he could do nothing to protect the mission from the

Great Sword Society, the worst of the mutual defence guilds, with which the Boxers had allied themselves. It looked as if the Government were deliberately handing over the Christians to the mercy of these rebels: they had apparently free leave to plunder and massacre so long as they did not go so far as to drive the foreign Ministers into taking active steps to suppress the disturbances. All mission work was at a standstill. No Chinese, unless he was already a convert, dared to be seen with a foreigner. To judge from the results, it was the settled policy of the Government so to annoy the missionaries as to induce them to quit the country. The danger was spreading. There were then actually members of the society in Peking itself, and the people freely said that they were in league with Tung Fu Hsiang, the general whose Kansu braves had caused so much trouble eighteen months earlier that Marine guards were brought into the city to protect the Legations against attack. It was said that Tung Fu Hsiang was himself a member of the society, and his well-known hatred of foreigners made it seem not unlikely to be true.

The same day we received startling news. An heir to the throne had been proclaimed in the person of P'u Chün, a boy of fourteen, the son of Tuan, a previously unknown prince. The city was greatly excited. Many men said that this appointment heralded the speedy

dethronement or resignation of Kwang Hsü and the entrance of the Empress-Dowager upon another term of office as Regent. Everyone was wondering how the country would receive the news. 'If things go on like this,' I wrote, 'one may well wonder whether the Empire can hold together for another year. We sorely need one or two great victories in the Transvaal to restore our good name out here. At present the Chinese are fond of comparing England to China, the Transvaal to Japan, and fancy that we shall go to pieces as they did. Until that war is over we can do little, and it is natural that people like the Chinese, who know nothing and only hear reports of our being defeated again and again by an unknown State, should think us as feeble as themselves.'

Meanwhile the Ministers protested against the inactivity of the Imperial Government, but, not being in a position to take active measures themselves, they protested in vain. On January 27 Sir Claude MacDonald wrote to the Tsungli Yamen, saying that the present 'state of affairs, which was a disgrace to any civilised country,' had been brought about by the apathy and actual connivance and encouragement of the local officials. He pointed out that the bands of marauders who went about pillaging the houses of converts, breaking down chapels, robbing and ill-treating inoffensive women and children, bore on

their banners the words, 'Exterminate the foreigners!' He explained that the late edict had been interpreted to mean that the Boxer and Great Sword societies were regarded with favour by the Government, and that the members of these societies had openly expressed their satisfaction with it, and had been encouraged to continue their outrages. He asked that these two societies should be suppressed by name, and that to be a member of either of them or to harbour any of its members should be declared a criminal offence. This note was supported by the American, French, and German Ministers, but, containing no threat of action in case of refusal, naturally availed nothing.

On January 30 Bishop Scott, in speaking of this note, told me that he realised that things had never before been in quite such a dangerous state. The Boxers were openly preaching destruction to foreigners in the city. He had just received a letter from Mr. Jones, the head of the Baptist Mission in Ch'ing Chou Fu, in which Mr. Jones took a very gloomy view of the situation. He said that the Christians in Shantung were between two fires, the insurgents on the West and the people exasperated and maddened by the Germans on the East. There could be little doubt that the German administration of Chiao Chou was such as to drive the people to the verge of rebellion. Stories, much exaggerated no doubt, but with some

elements of truth in them, of the brutality of the German soldiers were rife. Some time before we had heard the story of a Chinese lad killed by a German traveller for obstructing his cart just outside T'ai An Fu. Our priest-in-charge had seen the body exposed at the gate. Months later we had not heard the last of that story ; and one such tale did endless harm, and won ready credence for many others.

So things went on from bad to worse, hesitating ambiguous edicts being the only answer to the Foreign Ministers' complaints. At one inoment we heard that Yuan Shih K'ai was taking active measures, at the next that the Boxers were pillaging the Christians. February wore slowly away and March was drawing to an end. The Boxers were quietly spreading their influence in the north. On March 26 we heard that the people of Yung Ch'ing had invited them in, and that our priest in charge, the Rev. H. V. Norman, who was afterwards killed there by them, was having a good deal of trouble and anxiety in consequence. The Christians were greatly frightened, and some of the waverers fell away. Mr. Norman wrote to the Bishop a letter full of zeal and courage, saying that he was trying to make the local magistrate take active steps to maintain order, and that he had written to the Consul at Tientsin for help, demanding the punishment of the ringleaders who were stirring up the people to violence.

On March 28 we heard that two men-of-war had been ordered to Taku as a demonstration in the face of the apathy and indifference of the Chinese Government; but at the same time the murder of Mr. Brooks was finally condoned by the execution of the actual murderers and the payment of a small sum of money for the erection of a memorial tablet and other things which we considered trifles, whilst Yü Hsien, the real criminal, the responsible author of the rising which involved the death of Mr. Brooks, whose exemplary punishment might have saved the situation and prevented all the sorrows which afterwards fell upon us, was allowed to escape. It was true that Sir Claude MacDonald considered the result of the trial unsatisfactory on this account; but the British Government did not see its way to insist on the one necessary and useful expiation of the crime, and consequently a great opportunity was lost. Mr. Brooks's murder was really, as men speak, an incidental accident in the progress of the Boxer movement. He simply happened to fall in with a party of Boxers whilst going a short journey, and they slew him. But if properly handled his death might have been used as a plea for insisting at once upon the suppression of the Boxer society. The execution or degradation of Yü Hsien would have shown the Chinese that any such anti-foreign risings were fraught with disaster for themselves, and might

have put an end to the difficulty. The opportunity was lost; a little weakness tempted the Chinese to proceed on their mad career; and the consequence was, not merely that many Europeans lost their lives, and the foreign Legations had to undergo a trying siege, but that the whole of North China for many months was reduced to a state of anarchy. It is important to remember that Bishop Scott demanded no compensation for the death of Mr. Brooks as an act of retaliation. He at first urged the punishment of Yü Hsien, as the surest way to stop the danger which hung over the whole Church in North China, and when that failed he accepted the memorial tablet in the hope that it might have some influence locally in staying the hands of the Boxers.

The promotion of Yü Hsien to the governorship of Shansi was followed by the natural and inevitable spread of a movement the head of which had just received proofs of the approval and support of the Throne. The troubles in the country grew worse and worse. In Tientsin threatening placards were posted in public places. The 'Peking and Tientsin Times' of March 31 contained a literal translation of one of these: 'All the Christian Churches notice. We set one week's time. All the Churches must be converted into Immortal Halls, or the members must leave them. If you disobey, we will pull down the buildings with our magic arts or burn

them down with fire. Then repentance will be beyond your reach. (Signed) The Righteous Harmony Fist Society of the Empire.' In the district of Ho Chien, in South Chihli, a magistrate who went out against the rebels was wounded and his troops more or less defeated. Near Pa Chou, half way between Tientsin and Pao Ting Fu, the Boxers made a regular attack upon a Roman Catholic village, and both sides were said to have lost heavily. At Lin Ch'ing, in Shantung, they captured and mutilated Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant.

It was therefore with some surprise and great thankfulness that on April 14 I received a letter from a man who had left the Clergy School in Peking in the preceding summer to work as catechist in the country near T'ai An Fu, in Shantung. He reported that the country round him was more quiet, and that he had made some progress. His parents, who were heathens, were learning the doctrine; he had presented five people to be admitted as catechumens to the priest-in-charge before Christmas, and fourteen more since. I confess that that account filled me with admiration both for the catechist and his scholars. When I reflected on the state of the country and the dangers which beset Christians, when I considered that every one of these people was well aware that if his name was found on the roll of the Church the discovery would result in his

being a marked man upon whom the Boxers would make special calls, either to demand tribute or to plunder, perhaps even to mutilate or to massacre, I could not help feeling that any one who could so influence his countrymen as to induce them to run such risks must be a man of heroic character, and the people who yielded to his teaching must be inspired with something more than ordinary courage and devotion. In peaceful times it demands some self-sacrifice for a man to confess his belief in Christ ; in times like these he did it at the risk of his life. Such acts recalled the earliest days of the Church and impelled the belief that the Spirit of God was yet with us, working mightily to convince and strengthen the failing hearts of sinful men.

On April 18 the Bishop started off on a visitation to the mission stations in South Chihli and Shantung, leaving me in charge at Peking. He was away encouraging and directing the converts in those disturbed parts until Saturday, June 2, when he reached Tientsin. Mrs. Scott went down to meet him in order to lay the foundation-stone of the new church which was being built in the settlement. They proposed to come up to Peking the following Tuesday. But on Monday the last train went down from the capital and none returned. They were thus shut out of Peking.

Meanwhile for many days the anti-foreign

agitators had been waxing bolder and bolder. In April they were preaching openly in the streets and posting placards exhorting the people to rise. One of these placards has been quoted in Sir Claude's despatches, and is of singular interest.

Placard posted in West City, Peking.

(Translation.)

IN a certain street in Peking some worshippers of the I-ho Ch'üan ('Boxers') at midnight suddenly saw a spirit descend in their midst. The spirit was silent for a long time and all the congregation fell upon their knees and prayed. Then a terrible voice was heard saying:—

'I am none other than the Great Yü Ti (God of the unseen world) come down in person. Well knowing that ye are all of devout mind, I have just now descended to make known to you that these are times of trouble in the world, and that it is impossible to set aside the decrees of fate. Disturbances are to be dreaded from the foreign devils; everywhere they are starting missions, erecting telegraphs, and building railways; they do not believe in the sacred doctrine, and they speak evil of the gods. Their sins are numberless as the hairs of the head. Therefore am I wroth, and my thunders have pealed forth. By night and by day have I thought of these things. Should I command my Generals to come down to earth, even they would not have strength to change the course of fate. For this reason I have given forth my decree that I shall descend to earth at the head of all the saints and spirits, and that wherever the I-ho Ch'üan are gathered together, there shall the gods be in the midst of them. I have also to make known to all the righteous in the three worlds that they must be

of one mind, and all practise the cult of the I-ho Ch'üan, that so the wrath of heaven may be appeased.

'So soon as the practice of the I-ho Ch'üan has been brought to perfection—wait for three times three or nine times nine, nine times nine or three times three—then shall the devils meet their doom. The will of heaven is that the telegraph wires be first cut, then the railways torn up, and then shall the foreign devils be decapitated. In that day shall the hour of their calamities come. The time for rain to fall is yet afar off, and all on account of the devils.

'I hereby make known these commands to all you righteous folk, that ye may strive with one accord to exterminate all foreign devils, and so turn aside the wrath of heaven. This shall be accounted unto you for well-doing; and on the day when it is done the wind and rain shall be according to your desire.

'Therefore I expressly command you make this known in every place.'

This I saw with my own eyes, and therefore I make bold to take my pen and write what happened. They who believe it shall have merit; they who do not believe it shall have guilt. The wrath of the spirit was because of the destruction of the Temple of Yü Ti. He sees that the men of the I-ho Ch'üan are devout worshippers and pray to him.

If my tidings are false may I be destroyed by the five thunderbolts.

4th moon, 1st day (April 29, 1900).

This placard sets forth with the utmost clearness the spirit and manner of the Boxer agitation, the boldness with which they acted, and the superstitious

frenzy upon which they relied. That such exhortations should have been repeatedly posted in conspicuous places in the city for months before the siege, without provoking anything worse than formal remonstrance on the part of the foreign Ministers, was a most striking proof of the callousness produced by long residence in a hostile country. Threats had been so often uttered without fulfilment, Ministers were so accustomed to receiving similar documents from all parts of the country without finding them result in any very serious outbreak, that it seemed impossible for them to understand that the present crisis was more dangerous than many other crises through which they had passed. But men more closely in touch with the Chinese people could not fail to observe that there was a change in the moral atmosphere such as they had never felt before. The Chinese themselves thought and spoke of these things in different tones from of old. Servants and converts warned the missionaries in unusually clear and decisive tones. When the foreigners tried to reassure them with the remark that such threats had been often uttered before, they replied stolidly, 'There is a difference now. This will not pass off.' The French Bishop in Peking was so impressed by this, that he at last, on May 19, wrote a letter to his Minister which has become historic :—

Vicariat Apostolique de Pékin et Tche-ly Nord,
Pékin, le 19 Mai 1900.

M. le Ministre,

DE jour en jour la situation devient plus grave et plus menaçante. Dans la Préfecture de Paoting-fu, plus de soixante-dix Chrétiens ont été massacrés ; trois autres néophytes ont été coupés en morceaux. Plusieurs villages ont été pillés et livrés aux flammes ; un plus grand nombre d'autres ont été complètement abandonnés. Plus de 2000 Chrétiens sont en fuite, sans pain, sans vêtements, et sans abri ; à Pékin seulement, environ 400 réfugiés, hommes, femmes, et enfants, sont déjà logés chez nous et chez les sœurs ; avant huit jours nous en aurons probablement plusieurs milliers ; nous allons être obligés de licencier les écoles les collèges, et tous les hôpitaux pour faire place à ces malheureux.

Du côté de l'est le pillage et l'incendie sont imminents ; nous recevons à chaque heure les nouvelles les plus alarmantes. Pékin est cerné de tous côtés ; les Boxeurs se rapprochent chaque jour de la capitale, retardés seulement par l'anéantissement qu'ils font des Chrétiens. Croyez-moi, je vous prie, M. le Ministre, je suis bien informé et je n'avance rien à légère. La persécution religieuse n'est qu'un rideau ; le but principal est l'extermination des Européens, but qui est clairement indiqué et écrit sur les étendards des Boxeurs. Leurs affiliés les attendent à Pékin ; on doit commencer par l'attaque des églises et finir par celle des Légations. Pour nous, ici au Pei-t'ang, le jour est même fixé ; toute la ville le connaît, tout le monde en parle, et l'effervescence populaire est manifeste. Hier soir encore, quarante-trois pauvres femmes avec leurs enfants, fuyant le massacre, sont arrivées chez les sœurs ; plus de 500 personnes les accompagnaient, en leur disant que, si elles

se sont échappées une fois, elles y passeront bientôt ici avec les autres.

Je ne vous parle pas, M. le Ministre, des placards sans nombre qui sont affichés dans la ville contre les Européens en général; chaque jour il en paraît de nouveaux, plus clairs les uns que les autres.

Les personnes qui ont assisté, il y a trente ans, aux massacres de Tientsin, sont frappées de la ressemblance de la situation d'alors avec celle d'aujourd'hui; mêmes placards, mêmes menaces, mêmes avertissements, et même aveuglement. Alors aussi, comme aujourd'hui, les missionnaires ont écrit, supplié, prévoyant l'horrible réveil.

Dans ces circonstances, M. le Ministre, je crois de mon devoir de vous prier de vouloir bien nous envoyer, au moins au Pei-t'ang, quarante ou cinquante marins pour protéger nos personnes et nos biens. Cela s'est fait déjà dans des circonstances beaucoup moins critiques; et j'espère que vous prendrez en considération mon humble suppliche.

Veillez, &c.

(Signé) ALPH. FAVIER, Ev., Vic. Ap. de Pékin.

———, Ev., Coadjuteur.

C. M. GUILLAUME, Vic. Gén.

The Ministers met to discuss this letter, and decided that they did not consider that the circumstances were such as to justify the bringing up of Legation guards, and contented themselves with repeating their demands for the instant suppression of the Boxers' society, the arrest of its members, as well as of those persons at whose houses they met, and such like. They did not even threaten to take

instant measures for the protection of their countrymen, if the Chinese Government did not at once fully and zealously carry out their demands. Nine days later Feng T'ai station was burnt, and foreigners in the country were flying for their lives.

On May 22 a young American, the Rev. W. B. Stelle, then attached to Dr. Reid's mission, who afterwards did much valuable work in the siege, came over to see me. He had just returned from a visit with Dr. Ament, of the American Board Mission, through the villages round Cho Chou, a large town on the main road between Peking and Pao Ting Fu. These two men went alone, armed with revolvers, into the heart of a district seething with Boxer agitation, in order to encourage their converts. The account which Mr. Stelle gave of his journey was most thrilling. He said that in Cho Chou itself the Boxers were rampant, and practically held the town at their mercy, and that he and his companion lay all night with their revolvers by their sides, expecting to have to fight or fly at any moment; that they went into village after village, in spite of the warnings and threatenings of the people, called the converts together, and exhorted them to stand firm, reminding them of the great reward promised to him that endureth to the end. He described the state in which the poor people were living as one of appalling horror, beside which the anxieties which beset

us were light. There, in the country, they knew nothing certain. They heard of places all round them being pillaged, and their fellow-Christians ruined, maltreated, mutilated, murdered. They knew not at what hour the scourge might fall upon them. Every rumour of Boxer approach filled them with terror. They had no means of distinguishing true from false, and rumours abounded. They dared not meet in their chapels to pray or read; in the streets they were pointed at as doomed men. The joy with which they welcomed the sight of the foreign teacher was most touching; they all gathered in the chapel, and together once more sang the praises of God. To do this, to meet openly, to sing aloud together to confess their faith, with one voice to entreat the mercy of the Almighty Father, seemed to lift for a moment the pall that hung over them. They had been living for weeks or months in a darkness like that of the valley of the shadow of death. Like Christian in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' to hear a clear voice of faith before them, to hear their own voices, gave them courage, and they rejoiced. For each one remembered that 'some who feared God were in this valley as well as himself,' and that 'God was with them, though in that dark and dismal state; and why not, thought he, with me? though, by reason of the impediment that attends this place, I cannot perceive it.' The missionaries

also interviewed many of the local officials, country gentry, and village headmen. Mr. Stelle told me that the influence which the Boxer superstition exercised over the minds of these men was appalling. Men who could talk quietly and reasonably about every other subject, the moment the Boxers were mentioned raved like lunatics, and professed unswerving faith in the most childish and incredible stories about their supernatural powers. If this superstition had such a hold over the minds of the educated classes, it was little wonder that in the villages the common people were to be seen drawing water out of the wells in a time of great drought, and pouring it upon the roads in the hope of draining off the poison which they believed to have been thrown in by the Christians. Dr. Ament and Mr. Stelle returned in safety. One could not help feeling that, in spite of all the objections which might be raised to their action, they had done a fine and heroic deed. It was no wonder that missionaries like these, ready to lay down their lives for their people, exercised a great influence and won converts to the fold. The Church has never been destitute of such men, and whilst she possesses them, she *must* progress. It made me feel doubly sad at the divisions of Christendom which separate from communion men who so jeopardise their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Day by day rumours grew thicker and more ominous; we were continually being warned of the hour fixed for our massacre. If we had believed these tales it would have been difficult to sleep peacefully at night. Refugees from the country were pouring into the city to escape from massacre. At last, on May 28, Dr. Poole, of the British Legation, came over to see us with the news that the Boxers had destroyed the railway bridge at Lu Kou Ch'iao and burnt Fêng T'ai Station, only six miles from Peking, and that the engineers had fled, some by rail to Tientsin, some into Peking by road. It was the beginning of the end. I saw Mr. Stelle to talk over the state of affairs. He was full of excitement and in the highest spirits. 'We are saved,' he said. 'So long as the Boxers only plundered native houses and murdered converts, the Ministers did nothing; now a few yards of line have been destroyed, and they *must* act.' He was quite right: that one premature attack saved the situation. The Ministers met that same evening and resolved to send for guards. They no longer listened to the lying assurances of the Tsungli Yamên, they no longer believed that 'energetic measures were being taken against the Boxers by the Government,' they no longer postponed matters from day to day. They were at last assured that 'without doubt it is now a question of European life and property

being in danger here.' They did not even wait for permission; they telegraphed for guards and informed the Yamén that most 'serious consequences might result for the Chinese Government,' if necessary facilities were refused.

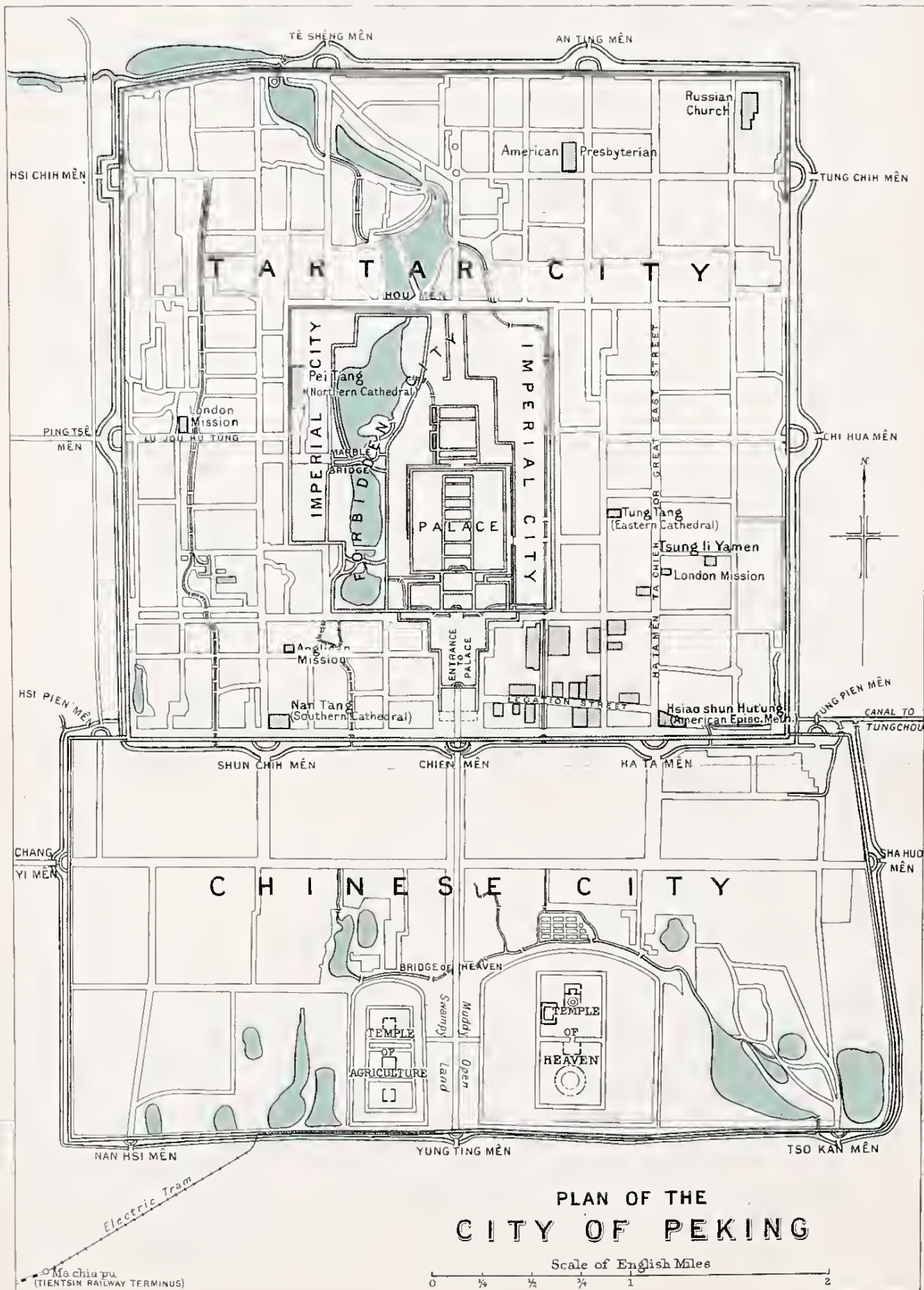
Late that night a messenger arrived from the British Legation with a note from the Chinese Secretary, Mr. Cockburn, to say that in view of the gravity of the situation they would receive any British subjects who wished to take refuge. I at once decided to accept this offer. There were with me in the compound the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Scott, two deaconesses, and a nurse. I kept one deaconess, who indeed would have refused to go, to look after the Chinese women and children who yet remained under our care. I did not feel justified in keeping the others in a position of danger. I collected the mission deeds and papers, gave orders for the ladies to make what preparation they could in an hour, and sent them all off in carts that night. Deaconess Jessie Ransome and myself were left alone in charge of the mission.

CHAPTER II

TOPOGRAPHY

To understand this extreme anxiety on my part to put at once as many ladies as possible in a place of comparative safety, it is necessary to describe briefly the situation of the mission, and I shall take the opportunity of explaining at the same time the general position of the places in Peking and its neighbourhood to which frequent mention is made in my diary.

The railway station, Ma Chia Pu, at which one arrives from Tientsin, is about one and a half mile outside the South Wall of the Chinese city. From that place an electric tram used to run to the central gate of the South Wall, the Yung Ting Mên. The contrast between the gaudy red and yellow car and the old grey wall before which it stops is most striking. It seems to illustrate the successful resistance of ancient obstruction. The effect produced on one's mind can only be compared to that caused by the sight of the Tientsin-Niuchuang Railway line passing through the Great Wall at Shan-hai-kuan. There,



too, ancient and modern works stand side by side in startling contrast; but there the breach is a most striking illustration of the victory of modern ideas over ancient conservatism. No foreigner can stand on either spot and meditate for a moment upon the progress of the world's history, thrust upon his attention with such striking clearness, without emotion, regret for the lost poetry of olden days and hope for the advancing enlightenment and comfort of the race struggling in his mind.

The wall of the Chinese city is not sufficiently great to be imposing, whilst it is sufficiently high to hide all view of the city inside from the new-comer. He is, therefore, often surprised when he has passed the little group of houses and shops which cling round the gate to find himself once more in open country, with the city, the real city, full in view, still about two miles away. The road from the Yung Ting Mên to the Tartar city runs straight as a pen, to use the Chinese expression, before him—a raised road, on either side of which is a broad expanse of muddy, swampy land, untilled and bare, over which wander a few thin sheep, plucking at the scanty tufts of rank grass. The soil is sprinkled with a white salt, which, in the hollows where water has been standing, forms little patches as though the place was cursed with the scab. On the right hand, at a little distance from the roadway,

is the wall of a great enclosure, the compound within whose inmost heart lies the great Altar of Heaven, the centre of the Empire's worship, surrounded by many great shrines and temples, with gorgeous blue roofs, itself bare, roofed only by the blue sky, to whose Ruler the yearly sacrifice is offered, the yearly prayers are made by the Emperor, the one High Priest and representative of the teeming millions of this vast empire. Opposite to it, on the left-hand side of the road, is another enclosure, smaller than the first, but yet of great extent, the Temple of Agriculture, described by one of the British soldiers as 'The Agricultural 'All,' in which the Emperor performs his yearly ploughing, to symbolise the duty which rests upon him to feed his people and lead them in the path of useful toil: there, too, he prays for the propitious influence of Heaven, whose son he is, and without whose beneficent care his efforts to feed his children must be in vain.

After passing these two great temples the road rises over a bridge across a little stream feeding some great ponds in which goldfish, the toys and pets of the Chinese people, are cultivated. Or, if the season is dry, the road goes round the bridge and through the bed of the stream—for the Chinese carter prefers the soft earth to the steep stone incline of the bridge—and then plunges at once into the shops and busy life of the Chinese city. Yet, viewed from this point it seems

rather as if the city was still before the traveller and that these busy quarters were only a suburb. This feeling is due to the dominating influence of the vast gate which lies right before him, the Ch'ien Mên, which towers up to heaven and seems to bar all advance rather than to invite approach. It is still nearly a mile distant, yet it proclaims in a voice of thunder that here is the city of the Ruler of the world; outside small men may build their houses like swallows' nests round an old manorial tower, but within alone is there a city of princes. Slowly the new-comer works his way down the great paved street choked with men and carts, hemmed in on either side with booths, by which the merchants, whose shops lie behind, seem to be struggling to press nearer and nearer to the centre of the tide, to thrust themselves upon the notice of the passer-by; then under a triumphal arch, and over a great marble bridge which spans the moat, a bridge of three roads, down the centre one of which no carts or chairs pass except those of the Emperor. When he is not using it, it is occupied by a host of beggars and peddlers, whence it gets its popular name of 'The Beggars' Bridge.' Originally it was a splendid and interesting structure of solid white marble ornamented with dragons' heads and other carved work, but the dirt of ages has now sullied the purity of the marble and the neglect of ages has

suffered the carving to fall into decay. Immediately behind the bridge is the central gate; but that is closed. All ordinary traffic must make its way round the great semicircle of the gate and enter either on the east or west under smaller gate-towers and so into the *enceinte*, to the huge tunnel which forms the entrance through the Tartar wall itself. This tunnel and the gate-tower over it were once amongst the chief glories of Peking. The massive building of that solid unadorned archway, its deep gloomy shadows, the huge red wooden pillars and the overhanging eaves of the green-tiled roofs of the gate tower above, formed a picture at which the oldest resident in Peking was never tired of gazing. The ceaseless traffic below, the undisturbed calm above, impressed the mind with an almost painful sense of the fluctuations of human life and the enduring influence of the past. It was a sight not fully understood at first; the full weight of its deep significance was only felt after many visits. For my own part, the Ch'ien Mên impressed me on the day that I left Peking more deeply than ever it had done in the five years of my life in that city. That gate and the Altar of Heaven seemed to me the things the most suggestive and awe-inspiring that I had seen in the country.

Within the gate was an open square surrounded with a stone railing, which I once heard irreverently

compared to a cattle-market. It was, like all things in China, neglected and desolate, its huge flag-stones interspersed with weeds, its stone lions which crouch before the red gate leading into the palace, and the gate itself, dirty and moss-grown. Into this enclosure no one was supposed to enter; but on warm days it was dotted with beggars and idlers sprawling in the sun or loitering about who had entered by the many gaps in the stone railing. These gaps, where the pillars had fallen, were often filled with thorns, or the pieces of stone merely stuck up on end and tied into their places with string. Anyone who chose could pull them down, and not a few did so in order either to sun themselves in the enclosure out of the way of the cart traffic, or by making a short cut to avoid the trouble of walking round.

From this enclosure east and west ran the Chiao Min Hsiang, or 'Street of Intercourse with the People,' so named because here first the Chinese were allowed to reside within the Tartar City. The east Chiao Min Hsiang was later known to foreigners as the 'Legation Street,' because here the foreign Ministers all gathered. As one travelled east along the street one passed the Netherlands Legation on the right hand (*i.e.* the south of the street) and the Russian and American opposite one another, the Russian on the north, the American on the south.

Then, across a bridge over the canal which flows out from the Imperial city through the Tartar wall to the moat, one came in quick succession to the Spanish, the Japanese, the French, the Italian on the left-hand side (the north), the German on the right. Close by, on the west side of the canal, was the British Legation, down a lane to the north by the French Legation, known as the Customs Lane, was the Austrian. In this quarter, too, were congregated a large number of the foreign houses of business or Imperial offices. The Customs Houses were opposite the Austrian Legation. The Peking Hotel (M. Chamot) was between the Japanese and French Legations. Mr. Imbeck's store, the Russo-Chinese Bank, Mr. Kierulff's store, the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, the Peking Club, the offices of Messrs. Jardine, Mathieson, & Co., were all on the south side of this street within the space of half a mile.

It was this quarter, a line stretching from the American Legation on the west to the corner of Customs Lane on the east, down Customs Lane to the Austrian Legation and the Customs House, along the road under the Imperial City wall to the back of the British Legation, then behind the British to the Russian Legation, that the besieged residents proposed to defend, and the greater part of which they did actually hold until the end of the siege—a compact quarter, the entrances to which could be

easily held by a few men against the disorderly attacks of a rabble of Boxers, and which were held with difficulty, but still held, against the organised assault of Imperial troops. One other place of great importance within these lines demands special notice. It was Prince Su's palace, commonly called 'The Fu,'¹ which lay behind the Spanish, Japanese, and French Legations on the east side of the canal facing the British Legation. This place was, as I shall explain hereafter, first taken by the care of Mr. James and Dr. Morrison as a place of refuge for the native converts. At first, whilst the Customs House and Austrian Legation were yet untouched, it was not of vital importance; but when these places were abandoned and burnt it became a post of the greatest strategic value; it then formed the north-east corner of the defended square, and the assault upon it from north and east was most persistent and furious. If the enemy had captured it, the east face of the British and the back of the Spanish, Japanese, and French Legations would have lain open to their assault, and they would have been able by seizing the canal to cut communications between the Legations on the east and those on the west of the canal. A glance at

¹ Fu is the Chinese for palace or mansion or great house. All the Legations are in Chinese called 'Fu.' To distinguish this place from the Imperial Palace it is simpler to call it 'The Fu.'

the plan will explain the gravity of such an attempt and the necessity of holding the Fu.

To the north of the British Legation was a large compound containing several great halls. This was the Hanlin Library, which was burnt on June 23. All down the west side was the Carriage Park, a large enclosure full of trees, containing some magnificent halls, and covered with deep grass. To the south of that again was a collection of Chinese houses bordering an open square known as the Mongol Market, in which the Mongols pitched their tents when they came down in the winter to sell their stores of fur and frozen game.

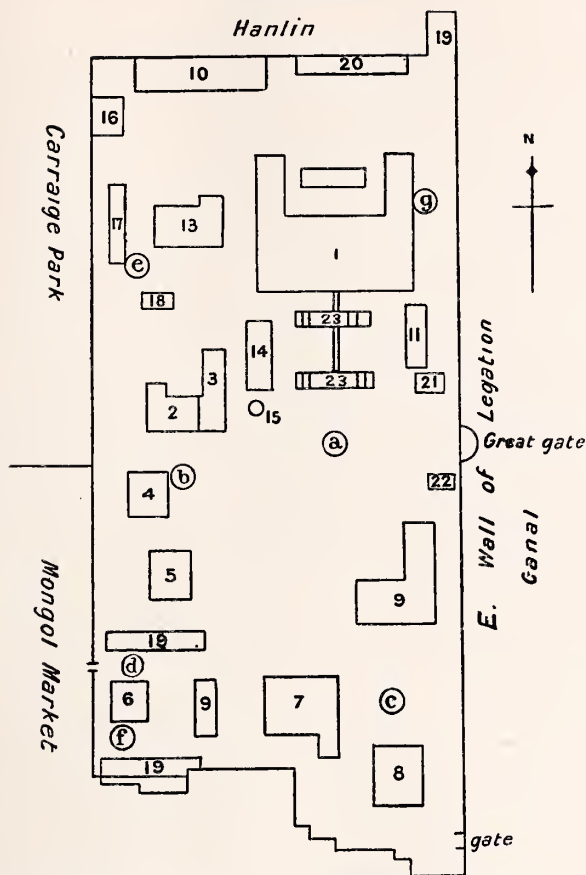
The British Legation was the largest and most easily defended of all the palaces in this quarter. It was indeed liable to direct attack from the Mongol Market, from the Carriage Park, from the Hanlin, and, as we afterwards found out to our cost, to shell-fire from the Imperial City wall, which was just across the road from the Hanlin. But that was a method of attack from which at the beginning of the siege we believed ourselves to have no means of escape. When the plan of defence was drawn up no one supposed for one moment that we could survive shell-fire from any of the Tartar walls; still less did we expect to survive it from such close quarters as the Imperial City wall. The Legation itself was surrounded by a wall ten feet high, and we were

prepared to hold it in the last resort, if our friends were driven in from the other Legations, against all comers. It was well suited to that purpose not only from its size but from the abundance of its water supply. It contained no less than five wells of good sweet water. Water is everywhere abundant in Peking. One has only to dig down a few feet to reach it; but it is nearly all brackish and bitter, and generally so impure as to be highly dangerous. Consequently, a well of sweet water is considered by the Chinese a source of revenue, and people carry water from such wells considerable distances in carts to supply the needs of their less fortunate neighbours. Besides these, the Legation was also rich in two large wells of bitter water, which could be used to extinguish fires or for washing purposes.

Within its walls were eleven houses occupied by Europeans, nearly all constructed on foreign plans, a chapel, a theatre, a covered bowling alley, a fives court, and two large pavilions before the Minister's house, all capable of holding visitors at a pinch, so that the Legation could accommodate a large crowd of people.

The other Legations were all much of the same general description, but smaller and more crowded.

Let this, then, suffice for the description of this part of the city. Outside these lines were mainly missionaries and some of the Customs staff. The



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The Minister's house | 14. Chapel |
| 2. Chinese Assistant Secretary (Mr. Ker) | 15. Bell-tower |
| 3. Doctor (Dr. Poole) | 16. Students' mess-room. |
| 4. Chinese Secretary (Mr. Cockburn) | 17. Bowling alley |
| 5. Accountant (Mr. Tours) | 18. Fives court |
| 6. Escort quarters, stable yard, students | 19. Stables |
| 7. Ohancery | 20. Servants' quarters |
| 8. First Secretary of Legation | 21. Gate-house (Sergeant Herring) |
| 9. Second Secretary of Legation | 22. Armoury |
| 10. Students | 23. T'ing'rh, open pavilion |
| 11. Escort quarters, students | <i>a, b, c, e, g.</i> Good drinking-water wells |
| 13. Theatre | <i>d and f.</i> Large wells of bitter water |

Roman Catholics had three large centres ; one, the Pei-T'ang, or Northern Cathedral, was inside the Imperial City to the north-west. They originally built their church close to the wall of the Palace grounds, and when the Emperor objected to its lofty towers overlooking his garden, they insisted upon his building for them a new one, which he did. In this, which was large and surrounded with a quarter containing the houses of the native converts, the French Bishop, Monseigneur Favier, defended his people with the aid of a few French and Italian guards throughout the siege ; another, the Tung T'ang, or East Cathedral, was to the north of the Austrian Legation on the east side of the Imperial City ; the third was the Nan T'ang, or South Cathedral, just inside the south-west gate of the Tartar City. Both these were destroyed in the early days of the siege.

The American Presbyterians had a large compound in the north of the city ; the London Mission had two compounds—one in the east, another in the west just inside the P'ing Tsê Mên ; the American Board Mission was in the east ; and in the south-east, close to the Ha Ta Mên, in the Hsiao Shun Hu-tung, was the large compound of the American Episcopal Methodists Mission. It was to this last that all the other missionaries fled with their flocks, and it was fortified and held by them with the aid of twenty

American Marines until the ultimatum on June 19 forced them all to come into the lines defended by the troops.

The Anglican Mission, of which I was in charge, was in the West City, a little to the north of the Nan T'ang. There were two compounds—one containing the church, bishop's house, deaconesses' house, and clergy house; the other containing the hospital and some houses inhabited by converts.

Numerically it was a very small mission compared with most of the others in Peking. The deaconesses had classes for women and a small girls' school, but at this time most of the children, who came from the country, had been sent home for a holiday. There was a printing press, in which the Prayer Books and religious tracts of the mission were printed, and a small school for boys attended by children who lived near. I was engaged in trying to build up a small Clergy School for the diocese, but at this time I had only three boys under my care, of whom I shall have occasion to speak later. The converts only numbered in all about 100, including men, women, and children. The mission in Peking had for many years been devoted to education, and had made very little effort to reach the heathen at our doors. The policy of the Bishop had been to educate teachers, and the staff in Peking had never been strong enough to have time for direct evangel-

istic work. This was in many ways a great disadvantage, as it prevented new-comers from getting into direct contact with heathen thought and life; but it was impossible for one man to do everything. Nevertheless, during Lent in this year we had been making an effort to do something by holding services for the heathen, which were fairly well attended, and from which we had hopes of seeing some fruit, when the disturbances grew so serious as to break off the work.

Within a stone's throw of us, to the north, was the house of Dr. Gilbert Reid, originally a member of the American Presbyterian Mission, who for the last few years had been engaged in trying to interest the higher classes of China in the science and religion of the West. He spent his time in visiting and receiving mandarins of all ranks and conferring with them upon affairs of state or religion. For some time he had had the assistance of Dr. Martin until that scholar removed to take up his duties as president of the new Imperial Chinese University. At this time he had with him only his wife and child and the young student, Mr. Stelle, of whose adventurous journey to Cho Chou I wrote in the last chapter. These being my nearest neighbours, I naturally drew to them in this crisis, and often felt glad of their counsel and the encouragement which comes from common intercourse in moments of danger. I shall

have occasion to mention their names frequently in this account of the events of the next two months. They acted towards me with a generous friendship, and I owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

A glance at the map will show that foreigners in the West City were quite cut off from the Legations and the other foreigners in the East. There were two roads by which it was possible to travel from one place to the other. The direct route lay past the Ch'ien Mên. This journey took only half an hour. The other lay round the north of the Imperial City, and took several hours. Now, in the event of any sudden disturbance arising in the city, to go by the Ch'ien Mên would have been impossible. In times of excitement the open space inside the gate is always crowded with people. It is a sort of natural centre to which all men gravitate who wish to hear the latest news or to observe the tendency of events. Moreover, if there arose any trouble in the city, the great gate would be closed, and the guards on the alert; and the guards were hostile. To attempt, then, to pass that strait in a season of peril would be to court discovery. But the only other alternative would have been to run the risks of a long journey of three hours through the streets of Peking, to attempt to push round by quieter roads through the north at the back of the Imperial City. Though less likely to be disturbed, yet, if the people were on the watch

to seize stray foreigners or plunder deserted houses, the stranger would be liable to detection at every step, and to be stopped at every corner by the local guards. Thus it was with no slight anxiety that I viewed the possibility of several carts making that perilous journey. If we went together, the chances of discovery were increased ; if we separated, it was unpleasant to think of ladies travelling alone at such a time, a prey to nervous fears. But any disturbance breaking out between our house and the west might at any moment have placed us in the unhappy condition of having to decide in an instant on a line of action, and carrying it out with vigour. To get carters willing to run the risk of transporting foreigners might not be easy ; to make sure that they would fulfil their contract rather than secure their own lives by betraying us, was still less easy.

This will explain why on May 28 I was much relieved by the Minister's kind offer to receive the ladies of our mission at the Legation. One deaconess and myself were quite able to do all that could be done for the Christians, which, indeed, was no more than to encourage them and exhort them to stand firm to the end, and, if possible, set them a good example. It would have been useless and criminal to refuse the one chance of escape for the others. When Mr. Cockburn's letter arrived, I naturally supposed that he had received information which led him to fear the

worst. It was true that in the Legation there were no guards, but there were many armed civilians who could make a stand and perhaps hold out until relief arrived. If trouble had arisen that night, the chance would indeed have been small ; but it was a chance ; and in our quarter, if only the local roughs had risen in the hope of plunder, and had set fire to the buildings, there was practically no chance at all. Happily, nothing did occur to disturb us, and presently the carter returned with the good news that they had all reached the Legation in perfect safety, bearing a brief note from Mrs. Scott, to say that guards had been ordered up at once. I did not at first understand that, because we had heard that when Fêng T'ai station was burnt the telegraph poles had been cut down and the wire broken ; but it turned out that the Boxers had forgotten or neglected the older line, which went by T'ung Chou, the city at which the canal to Peking joins the Peiho, and so the Ministers all that night were busy sending urgent messages to Tientsin and the Admiral at Taku.

CHAPTER III

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS: MAY 29 TO
JUNE 10

ON May 29 we woke to find a large crop of alarming rumours flourishing luxuriantly. One of these was very amusing. It was said that the Boxers had resolved to burn the Peking Station, Ma Chia P'u, but had decided that it was enough to kill the man in the ticket office and burn all the tickets to prevent the foreigners escaping by train. But no more serious outbreak had actually taken place since the burning of the station at Fêng T'ai. I went over to see Dr. Reid to discuss the situation. I was not so anxious about our own safety as for the safety of two of our Chinese catechists, who were most unhappily situated. One, named Shih, had just come up from Shantung, whence he had been driven by the Boxers. He had made his name notorious by the able and zealous way in which he had helped our missionaries in the matter of Mr. Brooks's murder, and the place was no longer safe for him. He had brought with him his mother, his wife and

child, and two sisters of marriageable age. For them he was naturally anxious. The Boxers had an unhappy trick of kidnapping marriageable girls, and in the event of any trouble the worst was to be feared for them. The other, named Ma, had been longer in the city, and therefore might be able to find for himself a hiding-place, but he had an aged bedridden mother who could not be moved, a young wife, and two little children. Other people were young and had friends in the city, and could perhaps find places of refuge. But for these two families I could think of no way of escape, and they caused me the keenest anxiety.

All the morning the Christians were busy packing up their property and putting it in pawn for safe-keeping in case of sudden flight. But as the day went on and nothing happened we grew more hopeful. A heavy thunderstorm came on, which led us to hope that, though it might perhaps encourage the Boxers in the belief that they had indeed at last found the true way to propitiate the gods, yet it might induce the more peaceable to return to their farms, or might even render the roads difficult and hamper the movements of the insurgents; for we then believed that no Chinese would fight or go out in the rain if it could possibly be avoided. Then in the afternoon Mrs. Scott returned with the cheering news that the Japanese guard was expected that

night, the French and American contingents the next day, and the English on Friday or Saturday. A little later we received news that the railway was again open to Tientsin and that the mail would go as usual. Sir Robert Hart, it was said, thought that the worst was over, and Sir Claude MacDonald evidently did not think it necessary for Mrs. Scott to go back to the Legation. The city appeared quiet and the Government promised to take instant action against the insurgents. He said that he would send word if anything alarming occurred, but that we were safe for the present. The Chinese thought otherwise, and continued their packing.

Next day I again saw Dr. Reid. I did not get much news, but what I did get was encouraging. Dr. Reid was strongly of opinion that the Manchu soldiers in the city would not join the Boxers in opposition to orders from the Throne. I asked Mr. Stelle to keep watch in our mission whilst I went over to the Legation with Mrs. Scott to inquire for news. There, too, I got very little information, but heard that the Belgian engineers had been brought in safely the day before by a little party of volunteers consisting of M. Chamot, of the hotel, his wife, Mr. Dupree, of the Customs Post Office, and some French gentlemen, who rode out armed with rifles and escorted the refugees into the city. On the way back Mrs. Scott was seized with the

brilliant idea that, as the line was said to be open, we might send the Shih family to Tientsin until the troubles were over. I leapt at the suggestion, and in two hours the whole of that family and most of the women and children who remained in the deaconess's charge were on their way to the station in little parties of two or three. These all got safely away and so were preserved, and the way was opened for the deaconess to leave the compound, which she would certainly have refused to do if she had been compelled to leave her charges behind to the mercy of the Boxers.

But no guards arrived, and I therefore insisted on Mrs. Scott's return to the Legation. Then Dr. Reid came in with good news. He said that the city was more quiet, and that a number of missionaries had come up from Tientsin for a conference and had ridden from the station in 'rickshas without experiencing any opposition. In truth, that was a very rash proceeding, and they all went away on the following Monday in closed carts and escaped to Tientsin by the very last train that went south for many months. Later I received a letter from Mr. Cockburn, in which he said: 'The guards may come in to-morrow unless the Chinese authorities make difficulties, in which case they will wait until reinforced. In any case they will come up together. One could not help wondering how far

off reinforcements might be if the Chinese authorities did make difficulties, and whether there was much chance of their ever coming at all. The present Government evidently could not control the people; it was doubtful if it could control its own troops. Every Chinese said that the soldiers were on the eve of mutiny, and pointed out signs of it, which, they declared, were plain as a pikestaff, but which were utterly unintelligible to a foreigner with no more knowledge of native custom than mine. What added to our anxiety was that the next day but one (Friday) was a great Chinese festival, and festivals are always dangerous. By night we kept watches in regular order armed with our one pistol. What we feared was not a general rising of the people, against which we were helpless, but an incursion of thieves and vagabonds, who might seize the opportunity afforded by the general unrest to burn and plunder. These might be frightened away by a show of resistance. Already we had experienced a small burglary. The Bishop's house had been entered and some of his drawing-room ornaments carried off. The next attempt might prove more desperate. This was a fear of which people in the Legations knew nothing.

The night passed quietly. In the morning Mrs. Scott sent me a note to say that the guards were to arrive that afternoon, and I went round to

hand on the good news to Dr. Reid and his party. I heard there that leave to use the railway had reached the Legations at 2 A.M., but that it was still feared that there might be some hitch because the Consuls at Tientsin had to make necessary arrangements; but we all agreed that if the Consuls could not get these finished between 4 A.M. and midday they were no better than the Chinese. Still, I was not satisfied in my own mind. All the morning our people had been assuring me that six members of the Privy Council were resolved to keep out the guards at all costs; there was a strong force of Tung Fu Hsiang's braves between the Ch'ien Mên and the station, and I did not feel happy about the reception which they might give the guards. Dr. Reid was very depressed about the situation, in which he could foresee no good to come. He believed that the French and Germans would get compensation for their missionaries; and, for the rest, things would be smoothed over until the guards were withdrawn, and then the same story would begin all over again. The time, he said, was not ripe for the partitioning of China, the only real remedy for her woes; the American and British Governments cared nothing for the missionaries; and the moment the fear of danger to Europeans was removed, the Powers would not agree upon any single thing nor back their demands by any serious threat, so that we might expect to

go on living in this state of miserable uncertainty and danger indefinitely. There seemed indeed only too much reason to believe that he was right.

But for the moment the main thing was to secure the lives and property of the people in Peking, and that depended upon the speedy arrival of the Legation guards. For the news that they were actually in we waited all day on the tiptoe of expectation. At 4.30 P.M. one of our servants came to bring us word that some people had left the British Legation between two and three o'clock to meet the guards at the station. I then sent out my schoolboys to see them arrive and bring me speedy word. That day was the eve of the feast, and therefore a likely time for ruffians to loot unprotected houses. The London missionaries in the compound near the P'ing Tsê Mên had left the day before to take refuge in the Legation because of the crowds of rowdy people who threatened their safety. It was the feeling of utter helplessness which was so depressing ; to feel that one could neither resist nor escape if the mob really meant mischief ; to have the Chinese coming in perpetual succession all day to ask, ' What shall we do if—— ? ' and to have no answer to give ; or, ' Can't we make some preparation ? ' and to have to say, ' None ; ' ' I suppose you will go to the Legation ? ' and to have to answer, ' I don't know ; I shall wait until things get worse than they are now ; I

shall stay so long as I can be of any use,' knowing all the time that staying in the event of real trouble would not only be of no use, but would invite attack. That sort of thing gave one a pain in the pit of the stomach and another in the top of the head. The moment an idea for planning either escape or resistance occurred to one's mind it vanished. But such ideas were rare and empty when they did occur.

In the afternoon I got a letter from Mr. Ker, of the British Legation, to say that 330 men had started from Tientsin at 4.15 P.M. I thought that serious. The number was too small; we had expected at least 1,000 men. They would not arrive till dark. If trouble broke out between 300 foreigners and Tung Fu Hsiang's 6,000 braves in the open plain inside the Yung Ting Mên, where there was not the slightest cover, who could foresee the result? Suppose that the Chinese troops waited for them at the Bridge of Heaven and fired upon them from the houses, what could so small a company of men do in a strange city, not knowing which way to turn? At the slightest sound of strife the doors of the Ch'ien Mên would be closed, and the turbulent people inside might think that the hour had come for a general attack upon foreigners. Suppose only that the Yung Ting Mên in the South wall of the Chinese City was closed, and the foreign guards forbidden entrance that night on the plea that the hour was too late to

guide them in safety through the city, who could tell what effect the rumour that they had been shut out might have upon the people? It may be said that these were idle speculations, that the Chinese Government could not meditate such treachery; but it must be remembered that within three weeks deeds far more treacherous were committed in the city with the connivance of the Government. The fear was not a foolish one, though it was not justified by the event. About seven o'clock Dr. Reid came back from a visit to the East City, and called upon me to warn me that he did not at all like the look of things. He said that the mob in the Legation Street and the Ch'ien Mên was prodigious, and the common speech threatening; he said that he had already prepared a place of refuge for Mrs. Reid and the baby in the house of a Chinese friend; and he strongly advised me to warn the Christians at the first sound of approaching danger to leave their homes, mingle with the crowd, and gradually drop out into quiet streets and byways, and wait for the day. For the deaconess and myself he advised me to prepare Chinese clothes, to avoid attracting attention more than necessary. He promised to find two carts and to send them to wait at the back of our compound. These carts would carry the deaconess, together with the two old women and two little children who were still with her, and my-

self. The plan was to drive about the streets all night with the curtains down, and at daybreak to attempt to pass out of one of the east gates, and so to Tientsin either by road or river as opportunity should direct. All this I did. The deaconess was disguised as a Manchu woman, and I was yet waiting for my clothes when I heard that a rumour was flying through the city that the guards were in. Then about 8.30 P.M. my boys came running in with word that they had seen the foreigners enter the city. They said that about five o'clock Tung Fu Hsiang's braves were led out of the South Gate to the Nan Hai-tzü, or Emperor's Hunting Park, outside the city, and the guards came in about eight o'clock without any disturbance.

The immediate danger was over. But the Ministers had run a fearful risk. There can scarcely be any doubt that Tung Fu Hsiang meant to resist if he could possibly induce the Throne to allow it. It was even said that he threw down his hat before the Empress and declared that he would hold office no longer if he were not allowed to fight. Between the visit of Dr. Reid and the return of my boys I had a really exciting half-hour, and I felt mightily relieved by their good news. We all went into our little church and had a short service of thanksgiving, with the *Te Deum*. We hoped that the arrival of guards would pacify the city. In 1898, when, after the return of the Empress to power, the city was

disturbed, and foreigners assaulted on the way up from the station, the arrival of guards at once restored order and forced the Government to take active steps. It seemed as if a like result would follow the arrival of the guards at this time. June 1 was a quiet day, and Mrs. Scott and some other foreigners travelled safely by train to Tientsin. The Government issued edicts condemning the Boxer agitation, and sent some troops to capture the rebels who had burnt Fêng T'ai station.

But for the Anglican Mission there was no peace. About eleven o'clock on June 2 a Christian ran into the compound from Yung Ch'ing, a town about forty miles south of Peking, in which we had a flourishing mission. He was worn out and his feet were burnt and blistered. He said that just before daybreak on June 1 a party of Boxers attacked his place, a little group of cottages about one mile outside the town. He heard them shouting and got up. They tore down the windows, and began to shoot through them. He hid himself under a large cupboard and covered his head with a box. His wife was hit and fell. The Boxers came in three times to look for him and then set fire to the house, and drove off his farm animals. Then he fled, getting his feet burnt as he ran. He got into the town and found the mission premises all locked up and deserted. He thought our priest in charge, Mr. Norman, had taken refuge

in the Yamên ; but he did not stop to look further, but ran on to Peking, without stopping to eat or drink on the way. I took the man over to the Legation to see Mr. Cockburn, the Chinese secretary, who said that he had already heard of massacres in the Yung Ch'ing district, and T'ang, the writer who took down the man's statement, said that friends of his own had been killed there. I got the man's feet dressed by the sick-bay steward of the Marines, and then returned to find that another man had arrived, who said that he had seen the smoke of the burning, but had fled without stopping to ask what it was. He brought a letter from Mr. Norman dated Thursday, May 31, in which he said that threats against them were very serious in the town, but nothing more. A minute later a third arrived, also run nearly to death, who reported that he was in the town and saw a great crowd round the mission compound and then fled. He was pursued and lay hid in ditches here and there, and came along as best he could, avoiding all public roads and villages for fear of being held up.

Later still another man, a heathen, came in with the story that the Boxers, after burning one or two of the Christians' houses and killing the inmates, had moved south. Then Mr. Davis, of the American Board Mission, called to say that their catechist in the south suburb of Yung Ch'ing had fled here with

the story that Mr. Robinson, a priest assisting Mr. Norman, had been killed, and that Mr. Norman himself had been captured. I did not believe it; it was only a rumour, and I thought that Mr. Norman, with his intimate knowledge of the place and his many Chinese friends, might have found a way of escape. Alas! it was only too true. The two missionaries had fled to the Yamên only to be told that they could not be protected there, and had been driven out. They then attempted to make their way out of the town, but were overtaken. Mr. Robinson was cut down on the spot, Mr. Norman was taken, and would have been instantly slain if a man of influence who knew him well had not come up and protested, saying that he was a good man who healed the sick and was kind to everyone. This man, who himself was a Boxer leader, had Mr. Norman put into a cart and conveyed to his own house, a few miles distant. What his intention was, whether to preserve Mr. Norman's life, or to hold him as a hostage, or to kill him, will probably never be known. Rumour reported later that a brick-merchant, who had had a quarrel with Mr. Norman over a contract and was a notable Boxer, went out and persuaded the people to kill him. The only thing certain was that he died—a great loss to the mission; for he was a man of unusual self-devotion, and blessed with a singular aptitude for understanding and sympathising with

the Chinese—the best itinerating missionary that we had. It will be long before we shall find his equal.

The strain of all this trouble was very heavy, and I needed help and advice. I telegraphed for Mr. Norris to come up from Tientsin, and he arrived on Sunday, June 3, and was thus shut in the city in time to be of inestimable value during the siege as a leader of barricade-builders. In the morning I went over to take the services in the Legation Chapel as usual, but got no certain news. I only heard a lot of rumours about the discovery of broken boats and blood-stained foreign books on the banks of the Han River. They might have belonged to engineers on the Lu Han Railway or to missionaries escaping from Pao Ting Fu. It afterwards appeared that they were deserted by a body of engineers, most if not all of whom escaped safely to Tientsin by land. Mr. Norris arrived at 4.30. He had scarcely sat down when a bricklayer from a village called Tai Wang Chuang, near Yung Ch'ing, who had helped Mr. Norman in building a little church in the place, arrived to say that he had himself seen the body of Mr. Robinson lying in the street of the city, and that Mr. Norman had been carried off. He added that Tai Wang Chuang Church had been burnt, but no Christians had been killed when he came away. We sent him over to the Legation to report, but they had already received the news both at Tientsin and Peking.

At ten that night our carter caused a little excitement by rushing into the compound to call us out to see what he called a 'Red Lantern-light.' He showed us a wonderfully bright planet in the west, very large and brilliant, which he averred was a spirit girl bearing a lamp. He declared that it moved up and down and was a portent of awful woe to come. The strange brilliancy was probably due to an unusual clearness of the atmosphere, and at first sight the light looked so big and close that I inclined to the view that it was a fire balloon such as the Chinese often use, until I perceived that it did not move in spite of a strong breeze. But anything is good enough to serve the Chinese for a portent, and a native Livy writing the history of these weeks would doubtless fill his pages with wonderful stories.

All this time I had been endeavouring to preserve the ordinary routine of school work. Of my three boys, one, Wang Shu T'ien, came from Yung Ch'ing itself; another, Lei Yü Ch'ün, from Tai Wang Chuang; the third was a Shantung boy. The first two could not but be anxious about the safety of their parents and friends, when every day brought fresh news of Boxer outrages in their villages; yet they prepared their work and listened to my lectures with at least the outward appearance of quiet attention, as if the world was at peace and

all things going on as usual. They never once came to me with a word of complaint or fear. I marvelled at them. I could not sit quietly down to prepare my lectures as they did to listen to them. Not a word or a sigh expressed the slightest sense that anything was wrong. I came into school and told them the latest news as it arrived: 'Mr. Robinson is dead, Mr. Norman is a prisoner. Open your books.' They loved Mr. Norman as a father, yet they moved not a muscle, and read as they had ever done quietly and diligently, knowing that their parents were in imminent danger of death and that their homes were probably being wrecked. Until June 5. Then a story was brought to us that some of the Christians at Yung Ch'ing, led by Wang Shu T'ien's father, had been taken to a temple and forced to do sacrifice. I did not believe it. Shu T'ien's father was an old man who had been a Christian for some years, and by his exemplary life and high character had won great influence in the Church. I could not believe that he would renounce the faith even from fear of death.

I went into school as usual. The boys sat there dull, speechless, broken-hearted. They could neither read nor speak. I gave up the attempt to lecture, spoke a few words of encouragement, said a prayer, and came away. Shu T'ien presently followed me to my room and said, 'I want to go down.' 'Why?'

‘ They don’t know what they are doing ; they don’t understand. They are only ignorant people. I will go and tell them that they must not sacrifice and renounce the faith. They all know me. They will listen to me.’ The poorlad was in tears, and I could scarcely restrain mine. I told him of the fearful danger. Every messenger who had arrived had brought a more terrible story than the last of the state of the country. Every road was held by Boxer pickets, who stopped the passers-by and questioned them whence they came, whither they were going, what was their business. Chinese say that a Christian has a Christian smell, and that a Christian can be marked at sight by his countenance. It is true of many, so true that even a foreigner as he walks the street and looks at the people as they pass will say instinctively, ‘ That man must be a Christian.’ Shu T’ien had this mark upon him with startling plainness. Even if he had tried to pass himself off as a heathen he could not have succeeded for a moment. No Boxer would have failed to detect him. Still, for my own part I was inclined to let him go. He felt sure that it was his duty to go. ‘ My father led them,’ he said ; ‘ I ought to go to help them now.’ I felt that the hour for cautious circumspection was past. No place was safe. If a man wanted to do heroic acts and run all risks for the sake of Christ, it would be better to let him have his way. But Mr. Norris, perhaps with

wiser judgment, shrank from sending a boy to almost certain death, and I did not feel sufficiently secure about the case to urge it in the face of his objection.

However, on June 7, a heathen relation of Lei Yü Ch'ün's came up from Tai Wang Chuang to say that that village was still quiet, and that Lei Yü Ch'ün's father wanted to have him at home. Then Shu T'ien came again. If Yü Ch'ün went, why should not he go? He was anxious to go. He felt that it was right to go. I could not resist that argument, and he went. Parting from them was terrible. I prayed with them, commended them to God, and sent them away, and fairly broke down. It was quite open to question whether they would ever reach home, or if they did whether anything but martyrdom awaited them. But they had the advantage of a heathen guide. Their plan was to go out of the city together, then separate, the heathen boy going first, Lei Yü Ch'ün second, Wang Shu T'ien third, each far enough behind the other to seem to be travelling alone, yet near enough to keep the other in sight. If the heathen boy were taken, the others were to stop and hide. The heathen would have no difficulty in satisfying the Boxers of his identity and harmlessness. If he returned, they were then to go on as before; if he did not return, or if the others were seen, then each one was to go his own way, and try to save himself. When they reached home, Lei Yü

Ch'ün could easily make his way to his father's house. Shu T'ien proposed to lie hid until nightfall and then climb over the town wall and get shelter in one of the Christians' houses, hide there all day, and then by night go round from house to house exhorting the converts to stand firm.

Whilst the Church has amongst her members such Christians as these she cannot fail to make progress—she must win the world.

The third boy I decided to send off to make his way, if possible, to his home in Shantung, where we heard that Yuan Shih K'ai was keeping order. He started out with another Christian who lived in South Chihli and contrived to get safely to Tientsin, where I met him after the relief. Thus my school was broken up, and I felt that my work was done. Meanwhile the Boxers were ravaging the province. On Monday, June 4, the last train went down to Tientsin; a few hours later the station next to Fêng T'ai was burnt and the line torn up. On June 5 we received news that Mr. Norman had really been killed. The few remaining native Christians were diligently seeking hiding-places to which they might fly in case of sudden need. After I had sent my boys away a regular panic set in, and nearly all the natives fled to one place or another, some to the hills, others to heathen friends in the city. The Ministers continued their negotiations with the

Tsungli Yamên, but without effect. The Yamên was helpless or deliberately inactive, promising much, full of assurance of the perfect safety of the foreigners under the paternal protection of a friendly Throne, doing nothing. Everyone was at his wit's end, not knowing what an hour might bring forth. Rumours grew daily more threatening, the people more uneasy.

Yet outwardly there were no signs of trouble. On June 7 the city was as quiet as ever ; in the streets not an ill word was spoken as the foreigner walked by. I had my Chinese teacher as usual, an excellent old Confucianist, who in answer to my remonstrances at his exposing himself to risk by coming to a foreigner's house at such a time replied, ' Why should I not come? We have always been good friends. I am doing no wrong. I have been paid to come, and I shall come until you refuse to receive me.' Then in the afternoon Mr. Norris, who had been over to the British Legation, returned with orders for all the ladies to go there at once. Why, I could not understand ; he seemed to have no definite information of danger impending. But people generally seemed uneasy, and we decided to let them go. It had also been decided that Mr. Norris should hand over the Mission compound, now almost deserted, to the local police, and that we should all go to the Legation for the night. I went over to see Dr. Reid. He seemed more hopeful, and Mr. Stelle was busy packing up in order to take

Mrs. Reid to Chefoo when the railway was once more restored, which the Yamên promised should be done in a few days. Meanwhile she went to the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung, where the American missionaries were congregating with their converts, and which they had already fortified. About 9.30 P.M. the officials, three or four stupid and sluggish mandarins, arrived, and Mr. Norris solemnly handed over the compound to their charge, and we came away.

In the Legation we found our missionaries encamped in the stable-yard house, and others coming in from all parts of the city taking up their quarters there and in the First Secretary's house. For the next day or two we went over regularly to our own compound to pick up small supplies of clothes and food. The city was perfectly quiet, and we had orders to lay in stores for a fortnight. But the incongruity of the situation reduced me to a state of helpless admiration. Here were we walking unarmed through crowds of Chinese, who made way for us, as usual, without the slightest sign of hostility, bound on an errand which meant that we thought it possible that within twenty-four hours we might be shut up in Peking fighting for our lives awaiting relief from the Fleet. Here was a Legation full of refugees all seeking safety from a possible attack, of which no one had seen the least sign beyond a panic amongst the Christians and a tendency

amongst servants to go home. In one or two cases a few stones had been thrown into the foreign compounds. I felt as if I could not treat the matter seriously. Why were we all taking refuge that day rather than on any other during the past fortnight? The city was outwardly far more disturbed a week earlier. Yet we were all preparing for a catastrophe, of the coming of which we had no proof whatever beyond wild rumours and the restlessness of the people outside the city. It seemed like a huge practical joke which could not and ought not to be taken seriously: yet it was serious, and we all knew that it was serious. No imagination or reasoning could make the two sides agree—on the one hand, the apparent peace; on the other, the certainty of coming trouble: the gathering of the foreigners to places of safety; and the deserted compounds untouched, unmolested.

On June 8 Mr. Norris heard a story from one of our Christians named Li which aptly illustrated the situation. This man told Mr. Norris that a friend of his was going home one evening through the city when he saw a boy of about sixteen walking down the street, marking here and there a door with a circle of white chalk, before which he bowed. Presently all the people came to their doors in a state of great excitement and began to discuss what this meant, whether the marked houses were the

friends or foes of the Boxers—the saved or the doomed. Li's friend, seeing this, went up to the boy, seized him by the pigtail, and asked what he meant by such folly. The people seemed astonished at a temerity which dared to interfere with the secret emissaries of the Boxers, and the boy himself at first tried to brazen it out, but when the other threatened to take him straight to the police-station, he fell down on his knees and protested that he was only doing it for a joke to frighten the people. So men lived in those days ignorant what might be the meaning of the simplest acts, a prey to wild terrors roused by any unusual sight or sound.

By this time all the stations on the line as far as Yang Ts'un had been destroyed, so that the promised restoration of communication with Tientsin seemed to grow daily more remote. It was plain that nothing was to be gained either by threats or entreaties from the Tsungli Yamên. We were most of us surprised that the Ministers did not at once order up a larger force to strengthen the Legation guards, but they seemed to be bound by the fear of provoking hostilities; they had no organised intelligence department, and seemed still to hope that the Government would suppress an agitation against which they had for months been urging it to take active steps in vain. The edicts issued under pressure were vague and worth-

less documents, which were received with jeers by the people. Some soldiers were posted near a wall on which hung one of these useless placards which said that many evil-disposed people had joined the Boxer societies and had created disturbance, and in consequence the Government wished it to be understood that the society was to be suppressed, and, exhorting the people to be quiet and keep the peace, commanded the military to seize all Boxers and hold them for trial. A well-known Boxer came up, pointed to the placard, and nodding to the bystanders said, 'Do you see this? I am a Boxer; why don't they take me?' The bystanders burst into laughter and the soldiers joined in it. Boxers were openly drilling in temples and the palaces of the Manchu nobles. It was well known that Prince Tuan, father of the Heir-Apparent, was then at the head of the society and his brother Lan one of their chief supporters. Whilst this was the case, what could be expected of any edicts condemning them except to weaken the authority of the central Government? The people understood that these edicts were simply words designed to blind the eyes of the foreign Ministers.

On June 8 the last of the refugees arrived, the members of the American Board Mission at T'ung Chou. The day before Mr. Ament, at great personal

risk, went out to meet them, and happily they all reached the city in safety. A few hours after they left T'ung Chou all their property in that city was destroyed. They went to the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung and came into the British Legation with the other American missionaries on June 20.

About the same time another portent disturbed the minds of the people. It was said that a spirit had ridden through a little village called Hai Tien, on the road to the Summer Palace at the Western Hills, on a donkey. The country-people were terribly excited and erected altars and offered sacrifices in abundance. This spirit, they said, had not been seen since the foundation of the dynasty, and its reappearance at this time portended fearful things. The Empress, who had been staying at the Summer Palace, returned incontinently to the city. It was said that she had heard spirits in the night crying 'Kill ! kill !' though who was to be killed did not appear. The stories were of interest, not as really affecting the political situation, though they may have done that, but as illustrating the state of men's minds.

Then, on June 9, the Boxers burnt the pavilion at the racecourse outside the H'si Pien Mên, and some of the students riding out in the afternoon were met by armed men, who threatened them and

forced them hastily to return. One of the students did not escape without first shooting one of these men with his revolver. The result was that all riding outside the city was forbidden by the Minister. The same day new members were appointed to the Tsungli Yamên, Mr. 'No-can-do,' Mr. 'No-can-understand,' and Mr. 'Gas-and-water,' as a wit punningly translated their Chinese names; with them was associated Prince Tuan, the reputed head of the Boxer Society. The appointment of such a man at such a time was ominous. Some men said that by intercourse with foreigners he would be converted from his obstinate hatred of the outside world to more liberal views, just as Wang Wên Shao had been converted; but the most part inclined to believe that the Government was tending daily towards open encouragement of the anti-foreign movement, and intending to use it against us. In any case it seemed unlikely that there would be time for such a conversion before the tempest broke.

On Sunday, June 10, we held a great parade service in the T'ing-'rh, or pavilion, before the Minister's house, because the chapel was too small to hold the unwonted crowd. In the afternoon we heard that the Summer Legation at the Hills had been burnt. Thenceforward we did not venture outside the city, and in the city, in spite of the outward friendliness of the people, only moved about with caution. On

June 11, I paid my last visit to our compound. When I left there were only two Christians there, one of whom said that he was going out to hide that night, the other that he should stay until the Boxers actually attacked the place, and then make for the hills and wait there in hiding for more peaceful times.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOXER ATTACK—FROM JUNE 12 TO 20

THUS, then, on the evening of June 11, all the foreigners were gathered either within the proposed lines of defence or in strong positions close at hand, from which they could at any time retire into the lines. But the streets were still crowded with people, and business went on as usual in the Legation quarter. The next day Mr. Norris made his usual visit to our Mission compound in the West City, and returned in safety. Yet, in spite of the apparent peacefulness, the condition of affairs was most alarming. That morning we heard that the Boxers had burnt and looted some property belonging to the Roman Catholics outside the P'ing Tsê Mên. Then the Chinese teachers in the British Legation all struck and left 'for two or three days vacation,' and many of the servants also took their departure on one excuse or another, whilst many more were hesitating. It was supremely amusing to watch the indignant scorn with which Sergeant Herring drove out the deserting coolies.

Sergeant Herring was one of the oldest members

of the Legation. More than twenty years ago, he was the last to arrive of the escort which then acted as permanent guard to the Legation, and the Chinese dubbed him 'The New Soldier.' By degrees all the others left, men came and went, but 'The New Soldier' remained as sergeant at the Legation gate in charge of all the coolies, and general manager of stables, gardens, park, and cemetery. By his size and strength, his deep voice, and powerful command of Chinese expletives, he made himself the terror of the population. Order reigned where he appeared, and respectful silence. Once or twice a change was made at the gate, but the result was trouble, disturbance, discomfort. Herring knew everything about the Legation—how everything was to be done, could be done, must be done. Long usage had made him a part of the Legation. He commanded its underlings like a prince, and strode through the city with the air of a man who was feared and who knew it. That day he stood at the gate pouring contempt, wrath, and sarcasm upon the retreating coolies. 'Get out with you! What are you loitering about here for? We don't want you. Out you go—you——!' and then, in answer to a look of mild astonishment, 'We don't want any skulkers round here, sir. This isn't the time for keeping a lot of fellows like *him* about. *We* don't want him.' That was all very well. But we

had then no Christians to act as coolies, and the place *must* be looked after by some one, and the mere fact that all the coolies fled was a bad sign.

This question was much discussed in the Legation amongst those of the inhabitants who had been in different countries and had travelled far. They thought it strange and unnatural that servants should desert their masters in time of peril, and many of them were disposed to judge hardly of the Chinese character in consequence. But in truth there was nothing very wonderful about it. The danger which threatened the foreigners was a danger which lay at the door of every servant of every foreigner, and at the door of every family connected with every servant. Most of these servants had their families in Peking. The Chinese theory of responsibility holds the family responsible for the deeds of each member. If one sins all suffer. It is not natural for the Chinese to understand the doctrine that 'the son shall not die for the iniquity of the father, nor the father die for the iniquity of the son.' If the actual offender cannot be found, the avenger falls upon the nearest relations. Thus the Boxers in their war upon foreigners and all followers of foreigners would not make nice distinctions between those who had personally aided and abetted the foreign devils. They would destroy and plunder the houses of all who through any member of the

family were supposed to be tainted with foreign ways. It is not, therefore, necessary to accuse the whole Chinese race of ingratitude and disloyalty, nor is it necessary to produce long-winded arguments concerning the nature of the Chinese doctrine of filial piety and its hold upon the people, to explain the defection of the Chinese servants at this time. Boys and coolies saw their families in danger of spoliation and death. Each one, therefore, felt bound to go home to make what arrangements he could to protect his own people or secure their flight. It could hardly be expected that he would do otherwise. The result for the foreigners was at first sight unhappy, as the Legations were denuded of servants, and no one knew then whence their place was to be supplied.

The next day, June 13, was a day of excitement, full, serious, and sustained. The first news we heard was that a courier had come up from Tientsin with a message that the relief party, numbering 2,400 men, had started on three trains; that Yü Lu, the Viceroy of Chihli, who had sanctioned the use of the line for 1,000 men, refused to let the rest proceed, and that they had then taken the train by force and driven off in defiance of his orders. We thought that this might perhaps explain the delay in the arrival of the relief force, since the seizure of the line by force would be an act of war if the Chinese chose to consider it as

such, and thus the foreign troops would be compelled not only to repair the line but also to hold it, as they came along in the face of opposition. We were sadly mistaken. The force which had left Tientsin amounted in all to scarcely 2,000 men, the damage to the line was far more serious than had been expected, and at the moment when we received what we hoped was good news Admiral Seymour was fighting the Chinese at Lang Fang, his communications with Tientsin were threatened, and every hour added to the difficulty and danger of further advance.

Then in the morning the German Minister (Baron von Ketteler) took prisoner a Boxer armed and dressed, sash, cap, and boots, in the Legation Street. There were two of them on a cart. Von Ketteler attacked them with his walking-stick. They ran: one escaped, the other was captured. Tales many and various are told of the way in which this man's capture was effected, but, no matter how it was done, the thing itself was sufficiently curious and typical of the country in which we were living. Where but in China could proscribed rebels appear in broad daylight in the public streets, armed and dressed, in the face of the edicts posted on the walls for their suppression? Where but in China could a Foreign Minister assault such a one and drag him by the pigtail into his own Legation and there lock him up to await

punishment? It is said that the German Minister refused to give the man up to the Yamên authorities, insisting that he should be executed on the bridge on the following day.

Then later I heard from Sir Robert Hart that the *Red Hand* had appeared in Peking, and had greatly excited the people. We had heard of this before in Tientsin, and I had supposed that it was a Boxer mark set on houses suspected or doomed; but Sir Robert told me that the mark was supposed to be set on the houses by foreigners, and was a charm which caused one of the inmates to go mad in seven days or to die in fourteen. The Boxers, then, worked upon the superstitious fears of the people to support them in their crusade, which, they said, was to protect the people against the evil effects of this villainy. The appearance of this portent was a bad sign, and prepared the way for the trouble which broke out later in the day.

In the course of the afternoon a party of Germans and Italians raided a temple where the Boxers were said to be drilling; but the Boxers had received warning of the intended attack, and the foreigners only captured a few weapons and a quantity of the red cord which the Boxers used as girdles.

Later in the afternoon things began to look more serious; rumours more alarming spread on every side. It was said that two of the Legation

servants had been cut down whilst shopping outside the Ch'ien Mên. Orders were given to clear the streets, and in a very short time all the shops were shut and the crowd had been driven out of the Legation quarter. It seemed strange to see streets, on the previous day so full of life and the endless stir of busy throngs of people, quiet, deserted, not a soul abroad. It looked as if trouble were hard at hand. It was indeed. We in the British Legation were just thinking of going to dinner, when, seeing some excitement at the gate, we ran down, and saw two fires to the east. Then we heard rifle-firing, rapid and repeated, and we began to think that the Boxers were attacking the Customs House. It was said that they had entered the city by the Ha Ta Mên, set fire to a chapel on the east street belonging to the American Board, and were moving north up the great street. The guard was turned out. The Marines doubled through the gate in the greatest excitement. 'I 'ope they let us get at 'em with the bayonet,' one of them was heard to say; 'it soothes yer feelin's more like.' Then the firing on the east, which turned out to be the French guards clearing the street, died away, but the fires towards the north increased rapidly, and soon the American Board Mission at Têng Shih K'ou, the East Cathedral of the Roman Catholics, and the Presbyterian Mission in the Êr T'iao Hu-t'ung were in flames. One

large fire, which burnt brightly for over two hours, no one seemed able to locate, and it was probably in Chinese shops in East Street. The fire there must have spread over nearly half a mile of buildings.

Everyone was on the watch for a surprise, and I was sent with Captain Wray and a small guard to inquire into the meaning of a light which was burning at the sluice-gate under the Tartar wall. That turned out to be the lantern of a Chinese guard set to prevent anyone coming into the Legation quarter by that way. The soldiers of the guard were perfectly friendly. After dinner the fires in the east were still burning brightly. I expected to see fires also in the west, but the trees were too thick, and we saw nothing, though we heard wild shouting from that quarter. We also heard the Austrian machine-gun and rifles firing heavily for a few minutes, and learned that they had opened on the crowd rather at random without much result. The whole city was in an uproar. The Boxers were evidently burning all the unprotected buildings, and coming down the different approaches to the Legations, and, finding themselves met by determined resistance, were moving round to try the next in turn. I stayed up till one o'clock watching the progress of the fires. I expected the serious attack at daybreak on the orderly Chinese plan, but, as in everything else, we were mistaken in

this, and the Boxers preferred to sleep late after their exertions.

In spite of the fact that we had been expecting an outbreak for so long a time, yet at the last it seemed to come suddenly, and for my own part I had thought that the Boxers would begin in the quieter and less protected quarter in the West City, which had been entirely abandoned by the foreigners. But here again I was wrong, and they began close to the most strongly guarded position, and doubtless thought that they would be able to walk straight into the heart of the Legations, indeed they were only warded off by the clearing of the streets and the occupation of all approaches to that quarter by the foreign guards in the afternoon. It would be interesting to know what the Empress in the Palace thought of it. Only the day before the new members of the Tsungli Yamên called on Sir Claude and declared that the city was in perfect order, that we were all exciting ourselves about nothing, and that we had no cause whatever to be afraid, for the Chinese officials were quite equal to preserving order. Within twenty-four hours the city was in flames, and its peaceful inhabitants were being massacred.

When we rose in the morning the fire at the East Cathedral was still burning. The Boy belonging to Mr. Brewitt Taylor of the Customs came in and reported that the Boxers had made no attempt

on the previous night to loot his master's house, though all Mr. Taylor's things were packed up in boxes ready for a move, as he had been ordered south. The Boxers had simply set fire to the buildings and gone on. That seemed to point to a deeper hatred of the foreigner and a more sincere zeal than was to be expected. To destroy, but not to rob, is evidence of strange frenzy in the Chinese. They began again about 11.0 A.M. We heard then that the South Cathedral was on fire and ran out to look. I thought I could distinguish two fires, and naturally supposed one to be at our compound, but at one o'clock Tu Shih Fu, the gate-keeper, came over to report that when he left the people (not Boxers) were breaking in on all sides to loot. He had gone to the Police Station and reported the case and then brought away the keys. That was cool, but useless in the present state of affairs. We saw also two other smaller fires. At 1.0 P.M. the British guard on the North Bridge brought in a Boxer, who, though unarmed, had walked right up to them dressed in full war-paint. He advanced dancing and gesticulating, and was taken alive. This behaviour savoured strongly of Boxer magic. It looked very much as if he had come deliberately to show that he could not be shot. He was bound in the court and sent to the cells. About 4.0 P.M. the Russians and Americans caught a man trying to set fire to the

Legation Street ; otherwise things were fairly quiet until it grew dusk, when the Germans on the city wall began firing apparently at Boxers outside the city, and then occasional shots were heard from time to time at different points.

At this time we were holding the whole quarter, from the Imperial City to the Tartar wall. The Americans and Russians defended the south-west corner, the Germans and French the south-east, the Austrians and Italians the north-east, and the British the north-west. The only foreigners outside the lines were the American missionaries in the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung compound.

After dinner we heard our men firing on the North Bridge, and a sentry ran in for reinforcements. A party of Boxers had come down from the north and had charged after receiving one volley. Two men in full dress were killed, and two other Chinese wounded. The sentry brought in a great pike with bronze mountings of the true old Chinese pattern which had been carried by a man who fell on the bridge. We sent out a stretcher for the wounded and brought in two men, who protested that they were harmless citizens who had been fools enough to come out of their houses when the row began to see the fun. They always say that. Dr. Poole dressed their wounds, kept them several days, and at last sent them away in a cart to their own homes.

After that things quieted down a little, and the roar which we had heard in the south-east gradually died away. About 12.0 P.M. we again heard occasional volleys, but no longer the roar of the mob. The Boxers were again trying every possible road into the foreign quarter, and at each found their way blocked.

On June 15 the Boxers again began operations about 11 A.M. by starting large fires in the West City, and the report went abroad that they were massacring the Christians in that quarter, and that some of the greater mandarins had been seen driving about the city to watch the carnage during the night. Dr. Morrison, the 'Times' correspondent, and Mr. Huberty James, a professor in the Imperial Chinese University—the sole monument of the Emperor's efforts at reform which had survived the reaction which set in when the Empress returned to power in 1898—set to work to induce the Ministers to send over a party of Marines to save the unfortunate Christians. Mr. Norris, of the Anglican Mission, also went everywhere entreating to be allowed to go with any party which might be sent to that quarter to look out for our Christians. He was the more urgent because the gatekeeper, Tu Shih Fu, had come over in the morning with the report that when he left the Boxers were in possession of the compound, and that they had arrived just at the unhappy moment when some of our Christians had returned to their houses. In

spite, however, of Mr. Norris's efforts, the party, which Dr. Morrison at last succeeded in organising, set off without his knowledge, and so all hope of saving the poor remnants of our small congregation was lost.

Dr. Morrison returned in the afternoon with a large convoy of Roman Catholic Christians, and brought the most ghastly story of the state of affairs in the streets round the South Cathedral. He said that it was the most horrible sight that he had ever seen. They found the Boxers going about from house to house cutting down every Christian they could find, and the place was running with blood. The rescue party marched through the streets calling upon the Christians to come out and join them, and many did so. Amongst them many were wounded and some were sick. They were escorted over to the East City and placed in Prince Su's palace, commonly called 'The Fu,' by the care of Dr. Morrison and Mr. Huberty James, and there tended with the utmost care by these two men, assisted by a few volunteers, whilst the French Fathers from the Cathedral were settled in the hotel. Afterwards, when the character of the siege changed from the irregular assaults of Boxers to the orderly attack of the Imperial troops, these Christians received rations from the common store. In the course of the day a large number came in. Dr. Morrison, in his report in the 'Times,' estimates the entire number of Roman Catholic

Christians within the lines during the siege at 1,200 ; but Mr. Stelle, who, with Mr. Hobart, was general organiser of the coolie labour, assured me that it amounted to 2,000 ; and that was the common belief of the missionaries in the British Legation.

By rescuing these people and placing them in the Fu, Dr. Morrison did signal service to the besieged. In the first place he provided a large number of coolies, whose labour was invaluable in the building of the barricades which formed so marked a characteristic of the later stage of the siege. Secondly, he opened the way for the Protestant missionaries to insist on the right to bring in their Christians with them when they were forced to retire from the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung on June 20, whereby we gained an equally valuable accession of useful workmen. This right had up to this date been steadily refused by the foreign Ministers, and was never openly admitted by them until the event proved that we could not possibly have been saved without the Christians. Thirdly, in occupying the Fu he seized a most valuable strategic position, from a military point of view, since the artificial hills in the grounds of that place overlooked the east wall of the British Legation and covered the back of the Spanish, Japanese, and French Legations. When the Legations were attacked by the Imperial troops the importance of this position was fully realised, and the holding of it

became one of the most difficult and dangerous parts of the defence.

It is difficult for outsiders to appreciate fairly the action of the foreign Ministers with regard to these Christians. They were no doubt hampered by the technical objections to defending Chinese against the attacks of the Government or even of the rebellious mob, such as prevented them from making any attempt to fortify their own Legations until they were forced to do so by threats of annihilation. They no doubt feared that the presence of a large number of Chinese within the lines might be a source of danger, for they could perhaps hardly be expected to foresee the value of the natives as workmen or the constancy and zeal with which they afterwards served their defenders ; but it is difficult to believe that their action was not in part due to avoidable ignorance of the true situation. One could not but be struck throughout the whole of the earlier troubles in Peking with the strange failure of the Ministers to use any regular and efficient means for procuring information either of actual facts or of the state of feeling in the different parts of the city, or of the probable course of events. It would scarcely be untrue to say that many missionaries and laymen in the city were better informed than the Legations ; and yet the tradition of the Legations forbade due weight being given to their testimony

when offered, and still less was direct evidence from Chinese sources admitted. Thus it came to pass that the Ministers seemed to display an almost cruel disregard for the massacre or sufferings of native Christians, and one of the chief elements in our salvation was left to the generosity and ability of men who had no official connection with the Legations.

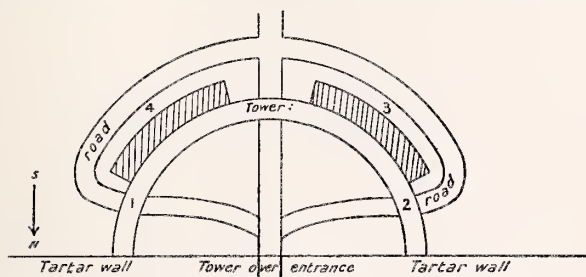
That afternoon some of us went round the defended square to see the barricades. These were for the most part merely Chinese carts turned on their sides across the road to stop rushes of Boxers, very different from the strong brick and mud walls which later took their place when it became necessary to find shelter from a furious and well-directed rifle fire. But, even so, the quiet and deserted appearance of the streets made us feel that we were indeed in a state of siege. Scarcely a single Chinese was met in the once crowded thoroughfares; at every corner was an armed guard; no Chinese could get in or out without a pass, signed by a foreigner and stamped with the official seal of his Legation. We went to Kierulff's store and laid in a few more tins of meat. News of the relief force was very uncertain, and it was really difficult to know how much stores we ought to have. The day before nearly the whole Legation had been reduced to tinned meat, and we did not know when supplies from

outside might be wholly cut off, and in itself it was not an easy matter to judge how much was necessary for half a dozen people for a fortnight. No one then supposed that the siege could possibly last longer. In the evening we expected and made preparations for a lively night, but in fact nothing occurred to disturb our rest.

Eleven o'clock seemed to be a favourite hour with the Boxers. On the 16th they started a fire in a shop outside the Ch'ien Mên, which did a great trade in foreign medicines, and another far away to the west, which we guessed might be at the London Mission near the P'ing Tsê Mên. The fire outside the Ch'ien Mên rapidly spread to huge dimensions. The Boxers had before given out that by their incantations they could confine the fury of the flames to the one house which they proposed to destroy. The event did not justify their claims. In a short time the whole quarter was ablaze. The smoke spread in a great cloud all over the city, and huge tongues of flame shot over the wall sixty or seventy feet into the air. As the roofs fell in, the sound was as of heavy volleys of rifle fire, and there were frequent loud reports as of great cannon, presumably caused by the burning of shops stored with petroleum or Chinese fireworks and powder, of which there were many on the great street outside the gate. After lunch I went out on to the

Tartar wall and watched the fire until 5.0 P.M. It had then spread over a large quarter on the west side of the great street, and was raging with the utmost fury. The Chinese on the east side of the street were busy trying to save their property by carrying it out into the moat, which was then dry. They used few carts, as the distance was not great. Men, women, and children were gathering together their valuables and making them into bundles, whilst others were carrying off the heavier furniture slung on poles between two, others were collecting mats and putting up shelters in the moat for the homeless. The strange thing was that there was very little noise. Coolies ran to and fro laden with bundles, boxes, and furniture of all sorts, but they scarcely spoke and there was no shouting. They worked as silently and busily as ants carrying away the eggs from a disturbed nest. The only sound that broke the silence of the bright still atmosphere was the crackling of the burning beams and the crash of falling houses. One man who occupied a shop exactly at the east corner, where the road round the outside of the *enceinte* joins the main street to the south, was busy pouring water on his house roof with a small foreign hose. It seemed a strange thing to see a man there using a foreign engine to help him against a calamity brought on by the hatred of all things foreign ; but no one molested him.

On the other hand, we saw very few men dressed in Boxer uniform, and those that did appear were not attacked, as one would have expected anywhere but in China, with curses and blows as the authors of so great a disaster, but passed quietly to and fro like ordinary folk armed only with the great knife or sword. Once, the Imperial soldiers who held the tower over the gate cried out upon one and made as though they would have seized him,



1, 2. Smaller gate towers.

3, 4. Arcades.

but he eluded them, and they did not seem anxious to take him. They were quite friendly to us, and we went right up to the tower, only the officer in charge requested us not to go further. The Ch'ien Mên itself is a great semicircular enclosure with two great gate-towers opposite one another to north and south. Through the south gate only the Emperor passes, and it is never opened for any one of less degree; ordinary passengers have to go out of the city by two smaller gates (1, 2), over which are small gate-

towers either to east or west, and then circle round the *enceinte* until they again join the main road outside the central gate. Under the shadow of the semicircular wall on either side are two small arcades (3, 4) with a covered way for foot passengers between the shops, which are known to foreigners as the Burlington Arcades. Here are sold a great number of trinkets and toys, wooden name-plates, and such like trivialities in great variety, and the place is one of the shows for foreign visitors. About 3.30 the arcade on the west side (3) caught fire, and, the houses being all built of wood and full of light and inflammable commodities, the flames rose high and spread quickly down the whole length of the arcade. It then became a question of much interest whether the heat would be sufficiently great and the tongues of fire sufficiently high to catch the great south gate-tower. The wall and the tower were built of large bricks, and there was no wood for the flames to catch below the small rafters, which in Chinese fashion projected beneath the roof of the tower seventy feet above the road beneath. The Chinese guard on the wall tried with a small hose to abate the heat and keep the flames from reaching the roof; but in vain. I was just about to come away at four o'clock, when I saw little tongues of flame running round the ends of these rafters, leaping from one to another and licking the overhanging tiles.

Then began one of the finest sights which man can conceive. As the flames penetrated within under the tiles dense volumes of smoke began to pour through the roof. Presently the floors and great beams and pillars which support the roof caught fire, and, being dry with exposure for centuries to the sharp winds and the keen hard air of North China, they blazed with incredible fury. This outside gate-tower was far less ornamental than the inner one. It looked rather like an American corn elevator, the thick brick walls being bare right up to the first roof without any external pillars or woodwork and pierced with windows, on the shutters of which were painted the mouths of cannon to frighten the invader. Thus, when once the fire had got firm hold within, the outside brickwork acted like a funnel and the flames poured out at the top, roaring, leaping, exulting like living things; whilst through the windows and doors one could see a mass of bright red flame glowing and thundering within. It was a sight to remember and to dream of in night watches—a Buddhist hell taken out of the picture-books and translated into reality, but happily without the tortured souls.

I had seen enough and was just returning when Dr. Morrison pointed out a small fire inside the city on the Legation side of the Ch'ien Mên not far from the Legation Street itself. There were men at

work on a roof quite close to it, but they had not uttered a word of warning. No one dared to oppose Boxers in the discharge of their duty. When Dr. Morrison pointed it out, the Chinese guard on the wall raised an alarm, but of course no attempt was made to extinguish it. However, it did no serious damage. The serious fire was all outside the gate. There hundreds of houses must have been destroyed in a single afternoon, and, as that quarter contained the chief silver market in the city, the loss must have been enormous. There was also a small fire to the east, but no one paid the least attention to it. It was said later that the Americans shot three or four men whom they saw running away from the fire by the Legation Street, but as likely as not they were harmless citizens. Most of the foreign troops were quite reckless in the way they fired upon the Chinese. I myself that afternoon saw the captain of the Russian guard take a rifle from one of his men and fire at five or six of Tung Fu Hsiang's soldiers who were walking on the other side of the moat. He called out, 'Boxers,' 'Boxers,' and fired in spite of the efforts of Mr. Pethick and other more discreet folk on the wall who shouted out that they were not Boxers. The soldiers paid no attention to him, but walked quietly on. It would not have been surprising if they had returned his fire.

This same day, in the morning, a party of our

men went out and caught thirty or forty Boxers in a little temple to the north of the Austrian Legation in the very act of butchering some Christians, whom they had fastened to the walls whilst they went through their sacrifice and incantations. The Marines surrounded the place and shot them, every man.

In the evening the Russians were busy pulling down a few houses which were uncomfortably near to their Legation. They were very wise. The danger of fire grew hourly nearer, and there were several places at which we might have suffered in the British Legation. As yet we had made no preparation to meet the danger. For the moment we were safe ; the wind was south, with a touch of east in it, and that would have prevented any fire from spreading to us. But we could not be too careful.

The next day was Sunday, June 17. After matins we heard a rumour that a courier had arrived, who reported that the Russians were at T'ung Chou, and this caused great wonderment and much speculation what they could be doing so far to the east, for as yet we all expected any relief to come up from Tientsin by train. It was of course a wild and empty report, but it kept men's minds busy until lunch, when the great excitement of the day occurred. I was at the students' mess, and the first course was just before us when we heard bugles, and,

some one calling out that the relief force was in, we all rushed away to see what it was. It was the alarm, and in five minutes the whole place was in a bustle of preparation for attack. I ran down to the gate, and there we heard shots to the north, and then bullets began to whizz through the trees close to us. Then the bugler from the North Bridge ran in for reinforcements, and a few men were sent out. It turned out to be rather a foolish business. A party of Germans going up the North Road had met a small body of Imperial troops, who, as it was said, threw stones at them. They replied with a volley, and then the Austrians turned out and began to fire, and the Chinese naturally retaliated. Our men did not fire, but retired under cover to await the result. Happily, a Chinese officer rode up and ordered the soldiers to stop firing. But the hasty action of the Germans might have resulted in serious trouble. This kind of thing gave some colour to the charge, of which the Imperial party afterwards made such constant use, that it was the foreigners who provoked the attack upon the Legations. However, this event passed off quietly without loss of life, and for the rest of the day we enjoyed peace, but towards nightfall we heard the Americans and Russians firing again. That night I kept a watch in the students' library over their mess-room, but heard and saw nothing more terrible than the sound

of the Chinese City watch going its rounds. In times of peace the Chinese watchmen perambulate the streets beating a large rattle. To meet them on a dark night reminds one irresistibly of Dogberry and his friends, a lot of old ruffians clad in any sort of rough and grimy costume, shambling along with a lantern and a rattle, looking far more likely to discourage honest men than to terrify thieves. One is always tempted to go up to them and inquire, 'How if he will not stand?' But the clang of their rattle, when once familiar, is a cheerful and homely sound, and it seemed strange to hear it when we were all shut up expecting attack at any moment. It spoke of a day which was gone, of quiet ordinary peace for civil men. It was out of place when rifle shots were the more urgent warning which night prowlers might expect. It could then only provoke a melancholy smile.

In the morning the last courier arrived from Tientsin with the news that the Roman Catholic Cathedral in that city had been burnt down again. This was the building which was destroyed in the Tientsin massacre of 1870, and had been restored by the Government at great expense. But whether anything more serious had taken place we did not know. The delay in the arrival of the relief force was causing a good deal of uneasiness. The troops had been already eight days upon the road, and no one

seemed then to have any idea where they really were. We calculated either that the railway was in a very much worse condition than had been reported, and that they were stopping to mend it, or that they were fighting their way up, mile by mile. The truth was that on the 16th Admiral Seymour, finding the railway destroyed and advance impossible, had begun the retreat which ended in his occupation of the Armoury above Tientsin, where he remained until relieved on the 25th. Luckily, we did not know this sad news, or we should indeed have been downcast. As it was, we were merely querulous and disappointed. Nearly all day it poured with rain. This must have encouraged the Boxers in the belief that they had at last found out the true way to propitiate the gods. In the afternoon, during a brief interval in the downpour, I went up on to the Tartar wall, to view the ruins outside the Ch'ien Mên, and got wet through for my pains; Norris, who went further, was simply drowned. The ruins in the Chinese City were still smoking, but the great gate was burnt out. A steam and mist went up from the face of the ground, and Chinese beggars were already poking about amidst the ruins in search of any trifles or bits of silver which might have escaped the fire. It is characteristic of the Chinese that they clear up the mess made by fires with wonderful speed and neatness. Every scrap of

wood, every unbroken brick, is of value to them, and in search of these things and any other odds and ends they turn over the ruin, and reduce it all to the condition of a level plain of broken bricks.

On June 19 the postal courier came back with the news that he had been unable to get through to Tientsin, and that all his letters had been burnt, so we felt that we were quite cut off from the outside world. It was a strange day, a day of peace, the last for a long time to come. We were still speculating on the possible advent of the Admiral, and some argued that if he arrived without opening the line we might be even worse off than before, for provisions would not suffice. We were utterly ignorant what a surprise that day would bring, and of the quantities of provisions that we should be hoarding up before many hours were over in preparation for a very different siege from that which we had hitherto experienced. As it was, though the barricades across the streets were gradually being made stronger in view of possible rushes, yet we were still able to draw supplies from outside. The only difficulty was to get money to buy provisions: many of the refugees were only supplied with dollars, and the dollar was rapidly falling in value, the native merchants fighting shy of foreign money, and insisting on being paid in lump silver. This was a source of some little inconvenience, but not a matter of serious

importance. Further, the Imperial troops were still friendly, and they had been seen to fire upon the Boxers. That very afternoon I took one of the deaconesses and Miss Lambert for a walk upon the wall to see the ravages of the great fire. We went right up to the Ch'ien Mên without arms of any sort and found the troops there friendly and peaceable. The officer in command came down to meet us and asked us not to go past the gate, because he did not feel quite sure of his men, but he allowed us to walk round the Wall to the outer Gate Tower Wall and to poke about amidst the ruins for tiles as mementoes of that great sight. We were joined there by other parties of ladies and men, who, though they carried revolvers, never supposed for an instant that they would have occasion to use them. The ruins of the tower were still warm, and the great waste of ruin beneath us was still dotted with beggars and poor folk turning over the *débris* in search of valuables. We stood and gazed at that strange sight for a long time, but we saw only two or three Boxers in uniform, and they did not take any notice of us. We saw two new fires to the west, and before we get back another had started in the south, probably just outside the Ha Ta Mên. It was a large fire, and we could hear the cracking of the timber late into the evening.

We got back to the Legation about four o'clock.

A little later in the day we observed that people were looking rather uneasy, and heard that arrangements had been made for a great meeting of the foreign Ministers that evening. By degrees it leaked out that an ultimatum had been received from the Tsungli Yamên giving us twenty-four hours in which to evacuate Peking, the reason given being that the threat of the allied forces to take the Taku Forts was equivalent to a declaration of war. Safe-conduct and transport were promised. There were great misgivings in the Legation that night. Quietly amongst themselves in small knots those who knew the real state of affairs discussed the situation and the probable decision of the Ministers. Amongst the civilians who had been any length of time in China the feeling against risking the long journey to Tientsin was almost unanimous. It was reported that the Ministers had decided to go : great was the indignation. To go involved a procession of carts over a mile long, protected by scarcely five hundred armed men, at the mercy of Chinese guards who would probably seize the first opportunity of attacking those whom they were sent to protect, who would certainly not use any diligence in repelling attacks from Boxers, and attack was certain. Men began to speculate what proportion of that convoy might reasonably be expected to reach Tientsin alive, and the general conclusion was, ' not half a dozen men.' Moreover, to go would

have involved the desertion of the Chinese Christians, whom we had just brought within the lines, to the most fearful and horrible death.

The Ministers sat late into the evening discussing the situation, and returned at last an ambiguous answer asking for further information concerning the supply of transport carts and provisions, and demanding an audience next day. In the American Legation people were up all night packing in preparation for speedy departure. In the British Legation men refused to believe that we should run such a horrible risk, and sat still to await the event. We did not then know that the Taku Forts had been taken on the 17th nor that Admiral Seymour had retired. But neither of these events, if we had known them, would have affected our judgment on the question of departure. If to stay meant probable massacre, to go meant certain destruction. Men could not and would not believe that we should embark on so suicidal a course. At 11.0 P.M., whilst the Ministers were still discussing the question, the majority of the inhabitants of the British Legation were going quietly to bed. In the compound outside the Minister's house were only Dr. Morrison and Mr. Brazier, of the Customs, pouring out their mutual disgust and amazement at the mere thought of the possibility of such madness. It was strange to think that within twenty-four hours we might be

in the midst of a wild struggle to reach Tientsin through a country so crowded with enemies that Admiral Seymour, with 2,000 well-armed men, had been unable to get to us in nine days. But it was unthinkable, and most men gave it up and slept.

Next day (June 20) the Ministers met early. No reply had been received to the request for an audience. Baron von Ketteler alone insisted on going to the Yamên accompanied only by his secretary, Mr. Cordes, and a couple of Chinese servants. Presently the grooms fled back with the news that the Minister had been shot and the secretary wounded by Imperial soldiers. That settled the question of our departure once for all. If the Government could not or would not protect the Ministers as far as their own Yamên, what was to be expected if the whole foreign community started out on that long march to Tientsin? The only question that remained was how best to defend ourselves where we were. All the morning we were busy building a new barricade round the front gate where the Nordenfeldt commanded the canal and road, and in gathering together all the stores we could collect. In this search for stores we were singularly fortunate. A large wheat shop was discovered full of new Anhui wheat; it seemed as if the man had laid in a new stock especially for our benefit. Of the three foreign stores in Peking, two were well within the lines, the

third was next door to the American Legation, and all its eatables were safely brought in. Of fodder we found great quantities in the defended area; there was one large shop full, and there were various smaller quantities in shops and private houses. Coal, too, we brought in from a shop close at hand. Carts were going to and fro all the morning laden with every conceivable commodity. The only difficulty was to secure carts enough to do the work.

It was a wonderful sight; everyone was slaving away with all his might. Mr. Dering, the Second Secretary, as master of the stables, was dashing about in his shirt, with his head tied up in a handkerchief, collecting fodder. M. Chamot, the hotel-keeper, and Fargo Squiers, the son of the American Secretary, who seemed to think the whole affair a huge joke, drove furiously to and fro, bringing in stores of all kinds. Mr. Norris was barricading somewhere; Mr. Ker, the Second Chinese Secretary, was coal-hauling. The military people were organising and planning. Gradually little mountains of various and strangely mixed goods were collected in different parts of the Legation.

Then the foreigners began to come in. The American Minister had sent to the Mission in the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung to say that he must recall the guard of Marines lent to them, and they came in, bringing with them 1,700 Christians. The

Christians were placed in the Fu ; the missionaries congregated in the little chapel, seventy people in a place seated to hold barely fifty, and began to arrange their camp for the night. The Legation students had a quarter of an hour given them to clear out of their rooms and make up their beds in their mess-room, and then their quarters were occupied by a mixed multitude of French people, store-keepers, and Japanese women from the Legation—nice clean people with jolly little dolls for babies ; whilst Kierulff's stores in the middle of their quadrangle made a fine hill, surrounded with upturned carts. The Russians went into the Second Secretary's house, the Americans into the Doctor's, the French into that of Mr. Tours, who moved into the Minister's house. The First Secretary's house, already occupied by missionaries, received fresh inmates, and its south verandah had beds for six men. The stable-house was full of Norwegians. Our party turned out to make room for the new-comers, and were most kindly received by Mr. Cockburn into his house. The old Escort Quarters, of late occupied by students, were given up to the Customs people. In the Minister's house was a mixed multitude of all sorts and conditions of men and women, amongst whom were the Baroness von Ketteler and any others of the refugees who were in special trouble or need ; the

ball-room afforded sleeping accommodation for a goodly number of ladies, and others were packed into smaller rooms. The two great T'ing-'rns in front of the house were crowded. In the first were encamped the military officials; in the second, a multitude of French and Chinese Sisters, some French Brothers and priests, and a few other French people surrounded with boxes, packages, and a perfect medley of goods. Boxes, bundles, packing-cases, were scattered everywhere in heaps. The place resembled nothing so much as the deck of an ocean liner just going out of dock, only that it was on a much larger scale, and order had to be reduced out of chaos not by a band of well-trained sailors who knew exactly where everything was to go, but by the passengers each for himself.

Such an incongruous collection of people it was : all languages, races, and tongues, struggling and striving to arrange their property in something like usable order—many sitting disconsolately in corners or grouped in parties equally disconsolate ! Some had brought in practically nothing, some were quite helpless, some were fearful and anxious. The poor French and Chinese Sisters, who had never done anything in their lives outside the regular routine of their house, were distraught and had to be tended like children ; no food, no bedding, no idea what they were to do, hungry and tired, but calm

and resigned. Sir Robert Hart came in, looking much broken, with only a mattress and a pillow. It was terribly sad for him to see all his efforts to save the country, all his labours of half a century, go to ruin in this way, himself cast out by the Chinese Government, which he had served so well. But nothing could destroy his kindly thought for others, or his unselfish disregard for his own comfort. He had saved nothing for himself. Even his priceless diary, kept with the utmost care ever since he set foot in China, was brought in by others. Everything else was gone. He spread his mattress on the verandah and long resisted the entreaties of his people that he would occupy the little room which they had reserved for him. 'What is good enough for my men is good enough for me,' he said; and only the conviction that his men would be troubled by his insistence on his own wishes at length persuaded him to give way. Directing everything, portioning out rooms, helping everyone, was Dr. Poole, indefatigable, unwearied, ever-cheerful. That day he did the work of ten men. It was surprising how little people grumbled or made trouble on this or on any other day during the siege. Everyone realised that the best that could be done was being done, and everyone felt that they must quit them like men, and they did it.

But time ran on apace: four o'clock, the hour at

which the event was to declare itself, was close at hand. All the ladies, except one or two, and all the unattached men, were inside the British Legation, at which the last stand was to be made. If the other Legations and the Customs could not hold out, they were to retire upon us. A small group of men gathered on the lawn, watch in hand, to await the expected moment. It reminded one of the Eights at Oxford. Five minutes more, three minutes more, two minutes more, and then firing was heard on the east. One Frenchman was shot dead, an Austrian wounded. Very soon we joined in. Captain Strouts was standing on the lawn. Sergeant Murphy rushed up and saluted. 'Firing has begun, sir,' he said. The real siege had begun.

CHAPTER V

THE ATTACK OF THE IMPERIAL TROOPS

I. FIRES : JUNE 20-24

WHEN the attack began we calculated that we could hold out for some little time unless besieged with heavy guns. The total force of the combined guards amounted, indeed, to only 18 officers and 389 men, and the length of line to be defended was great, but we had the assistance of over 100 volunteers, amongst whom were several able military officers. There were Colonel Shiba, the Military Attaché of the Japanese Legation, and his assistant, Captain Morita; Captain F. G. Poole, the Doctor's brother, who was in Peking studying Chinese; Herr von Strauch, of the Customs, who had been an officer in the Imperial German Guards; Captain Percy Smith, who was passing through the capital on a visit, and Mr. Nigel Oliphant, of the Imperial Chinese Bank, who had served in the Scots Greys. All these did signal service in the defence; and for my own part I never doubted that such troops and such volunteers would be able to keep

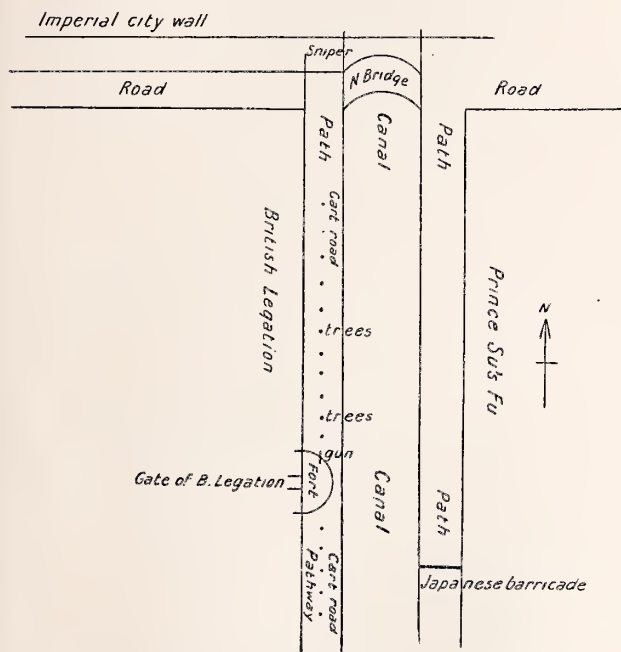
the enemy outside or to expel them if they broke in, even though it might be at the cost of serious loss. The greatest anxiety was lest ammunition should fail. We all knew that it was far from sufficient, and Dr. Morrison has since assured the world that the Japanese had only 100 rounds per man, the Italians 120, the Russians 145, whilst the best provided of the other guards had only 300 rounds. There were also four guns—an Italian one-pounder, an American Colt, an Austrian machine-gun, and a British Nordenfeldt of ancient pattern, warranted to jam at every fourth round. But still we felt sure that, though we might be forced to retire from some of the positions which we at first occupied, we should make a good fight for it. The really grave danger was lest the Chinese should mount guns on the wall and quietly shell us without our being able to fire a shot in reply. To have gone out to attempt to capture guns on the Tartar or Imperial City walls would have been impossible, and, even if successful, could only have succeeded at fearful cost. That was a contingency to which we could only blind our eyes in the hope that the Chinese would refrain from such desperate measures. For food we had already a large store of wheat and rice, together with a certain quantity of foreign stores of different kinds, tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, jam, preserved meat, fruit and vegetables, tinned milk, wines and spirits,

and aërated water. On the afternoon on which the siege began the Marines on the North Bridge captured and drove in a small flock of sheep and three or four cows. For the rest we depended upon the ponies and mules belonging to the besieged foreigners. At first these were all collected in the British Legation, and on the evening of this day there were over 150 ponies tied up in strings in different parts of the Legation. They created a veritable Pandemonium. They were continually fighting, snorting, kicking, and breaking loose, and Mr. Dering, the Second Secretary, whose charge they were, had a hard time to keep them in any sort of order, and he was continually to be seen tearing round the compound in chase of one of these refractory brutes. The number was far too great to be kept in the compound; the fodder which had been collected was quite inadequate to supply the wants of such a multitude. The poor people crowded in the First Secretary's house, surrounded by them on all sides, were kept awake all night by their shrieking and fighting. They were speedily dispersed. All the Russian ponies were sent back to their own Legation. Many more were turned out into the grounds of the Fu, and the rest confined to the stable-yard. Thus peace was at length restored.

Firing began, as I have said, at four o'clock. Soon

after we heard that the Austrians had abandoned their Legation, but no explanation was given of this action. The evacuation of that place rendered the Customs House untenable, and all the Customs staff came into the British Legation. Thus, on the very first day of the siege one corner of the square which we had held was lost without any just reason so far as we knew. At the same time the British retired from the outpost on the North Bridge. In the evening we lost one of the two men who had been most instrumental in the rescue of the Roman Catholic Christians from the massacre which followed the burning of the South Cathedral. Mr. Huberty James, who had been attending to the wants of these people in the Fu, attempted to return by the North Bridge, though that had been already evacuated by the British Marines. He was seen on the bridge by the British at the gate of the Legation. The Chinese, who had crept up to the bridge, fired at him. He threw up his hands. Again they fired and he disappeared, whether killed or taken prisoner no one knew certainly. It was a sad loss. He had been most active and unsparing in his care of the Chinese Christians ; he fell a victim to over-great confidence in Chinese generosity. Thus, the first day of the siege ended in gloom ; but towards nightfall the firing died away and the night was only broken by occasional volleys.

Next morning we heard that the Belgian Legation had been burnt. During the earlier part of the day we were busy strengthening the barricade round the front gate and cutting down the trees, which obstructed the action of the Nordenfeldt. The barricade at the gate was a semicircular one, and the gun was placed to command the road and canal towards the North Bridge thus :—



The trees, which bordered the pathway, hindered the view from the fort and afforded a little shelter

for the enemy. There were a few snipers at the end of the North Bridge, who hid behind the cover afforded by the raised roadway and shot at anyone crossing the canal from the Legation to the Fu. The Japanese had therefore put up a brick barricade across the path on their side of the canal, and it was the business of the sentry stationed there to keep the snipers quiet whilst we cut down the trees. The sentry did all that was possible, but he could not prevent the Chinese from getting in a shot from time to time, and it was a work of some little danger to advance outside the fort on the north side. I was much struck with the courage and energy of one of the coolies who volunteered for this task. He refused to allow a foreigner to go with him, saying: 'They will shoot at you when they see you are a foreigner; they will not pay so much attention to me.' And he went out alone and hewed down these small trees in splendid style. He was a very strong man, and, although he had before been acting as a catechist in the Methodist Mission, he wielded his axe like an accomplished woodman. Between his blows he interjected little prayers, 'Christ, give me strength,' 'Lord, help me,' and smote the tree with great effect. When the sniper became unusually active we called to him to run under the shelter of the wall, but he did not appreciate the warning, and retired at first reluctantly,

at last not at all. Then we lopped the boughs and made of the fallen trees a sort of entanglement. A day or two later I missed that man and heard with sorrow that he had been shot while doing similar work in the north of the Legation. Such men did honour to their Church and good service to the Legations. I regret exceedingly that I neglected to record his name.

Meanwhile a road had been opened through the south wall of the British Legation and the intervening houses into the lane which led from the canal into the Mongol Market, past the back door of the Russian Legation. By this path the Americans and Russians would have easy access to the British Legation and an open door in case they were forced to retire. During the afternoon Mr. Norris and a party of volunteers were building a brick wall to take the place of the wooden balustrade on the upper verandah of the First Secretary's house. This house, which was large and of two stories, formed a splendid mark for the soldiers on the Tartar wall, and they had rendered the upper rooms quite uninhabitable. The civilians had all been forced to retire downstairs, and the Marine guard needed some shelter. The wall was built of great flat square bricks and was very strong. At the end of the siege it was covered with marks of rifle bullets ; but it was never shaken.

In the afternoon we had our first funeral. Mr. Imbeck's little child had died during the

night, the first to succumb to the hardships of crowded living and strange food. It was decided to bury the body in the German Legation, and we went over there about four o'clock. The firing from the roofs of the surrounding houses and the shelter at the north end of the canal, which had been troubling us more or less all day, was then brisk, and we had orders to cross the South Bridge over the canal at the double, for there was as yet no barricade to protect the road. When we got to the German Legation we found the guard drawn up ready to abandon the place, which was exposed to fire from the Tartar wall, but the officer told me that he should not evacuate until he was absolutely obliged. The French and Italians were holding the barricade across the road to the east of the Legation. Happily, the soldiers on the wall allowed us to carry out the burial in peace, and we all returned as we went, in perfect safety. Later in the day we saw a large fire to the east, which was said to arise from the burning of the Austrian Legation, abandoned the day before, and the Imperial Chinese Bank, which was next to it. The Customs House had been already abandoned, so that the whole of that corner was lost, and the line of defence then lay behind the border of Prince Su's Fu to the French Legation. We were still hourly expecting relief, and, men on watch that night reporting heavy firing outside the city to the south,

we hoped that it might mean that friends were near at hand. But of course nothing came of it.

During the day another great work was accomplished, the organisation of the civilian population of the British Legation. A general committee was appointed, which acted as a sort of municipal council for the management of the civil affairs of the Legation. At the head of this were the Chinese Secretary, Mr. Cockburn, and Mr. Tewkesbury. The latter, who had been chief organiser of the missionary body in the Hsiao Shun Hu-t'ung, was well qualified to organise the larger community in the British Legation. He transplanted the system which the missionaries had used in the smaller compound into the greater, and under this government the affairs of the Legation were managed with ease and smoothness. There was no hitch anywhere. One sub-committee undertook the task of organising coolie labour and providing the coolies with food. At the head of this were Mr. Hobart and Mr. Stelle. Another, headed by Mr. Gamewell, supervised the building of barricades. Dr. Coltman and Dr. Dudgeon looked after the sanitary arrangements. The Fire Brigade was led by Mr. Tours and Mr. Tweed, who did admirable service in defending the Legation against one of its most serious dangers. Some of the Britishers complained at times that there was a little too much system; but

in fact the whole thing worked splendidly, and the thanks of the community are due to Mr. Tewkesbury and those who laboured with him for the peace and orderly conduct of the Legation during the whole siege. It was a work which the already overpressed military officials could not possibly have undertaken or carried out with exactness and success. In the hands of these men everything went well, and anyone who needed help of any kind knew exactly where to seek it.

The tower outside the chapel where hung the bell, the memorial of the Queen's Jubilee, was made the head-quarters of the municipal government, and there the names of the general committee and of the heads of the sub-committees were posted, and anyone who had any suggestions to make could leave their desires expressed in writing, and anyone fitted for any kind of work knew exactly to whom to offer his services. By degrees the Bell Tower became the centre of life in the Legation. On the boards which were set there were posted notices of all kinds, scraps of news, rumours of the relief force, messages received from abroad, translations of edicts, advertisements of articles lost or found, and any of the thousand and one things which interest or amuse a besieged people. The Bell Tower notice-boards took the place of the daily paper in more civilised lands. It was the intellectual 'market-place' where gathered

all who would either tell or hear some new thing. There men assembled in the cool of the evening to discuss affairs, to jest, or to grumble ; on its steps they sat in idle moments to watch the goings to and fro of those on duty ; there they waited for orders or instructions. The groups round the Bell Tower were always an interesting and instructive study to the man of philosophic mind ; they were an endless delight to the man with an eye for the picturesque. The Bell Tower stood at a place where four ways met. To the north, Chancery Lane led to the students' quarters, the theatre and the North Stables, the houses of the Marines, the students, the Japanese, and the washermen. To the east lay the road past the T'ing'rhs, and the great stone lions before the Minister's house to the front gate and the barricade ; to the west were the houses of the American Legation and the Chinese Secretaries ; to the south, Chancery Lane led past the house occupied by the French Legation to the Chancery, then used as hospital, the south stables, and the First Secretary's house, then full of missionaries. The Tower stood in the midst of tree-shaded ways beautiful from every point of view, sheltered, too, more than most spots from shot and shell. It was only once struck ; no one was wounded there. It was well suited to be the centre of the life, as it was by nature the centre of the structure of the Legation.

On June 22 at daybreak things grew more serious. There was heavy firing on all sides, and a great demand arose for sand-bags. Stuff for making these was already running short, and we had not yet found out the stores of material in the neighbouring houses of which we afterwards made use. People were beginning to use their drawing-room curtains, table linen, and every available stuff. Mr. Norris gave away his sheets and one or two men provided trousers, which made excellent sandbags, as they needed no alteration; all that was necessary was to tie up the legs and fill them. But many of the people did not realise the gravity of the situation, and talked about wasting good material.

Then about 9 A.M. the other guards began to retire upon the British Legation. It filled us with amazement to see the Austrians, Germans, Italians, Japanese, Americans, and Russians all pouring in. The attack did not seem to have been so serious as to justify such haste to surrender all our outposts. Dr. Morrison and the British volunteers were furious, the retiring troops scarcely less so. If the enemy had seized the opportunity to rush the evacuated Legations we should indeed have been in evil case. The Fu was packed with Chinese Christians—men, women, and children. If the Boxers had gone in, the most horrible massacre must have ensued. We were all in an agony of suspense. It appeared that

this retrograde movement had been made by order of Captain Thomann, who as senior officer had arrogated to himself supreme command. The Ministers hastily met, Sir Claude MacDonald was appointed to the chief command, and orders issued to the guards to return to their posts. The French and Austrians returned to the French Legation. The other guards resumed their posts. A mistake which might have ended in disaster, thanks to the carelessness or inertia of the Chinese was remedied with only the loss of a barricade in the Customs Lane.

The great danger which now beset the Legations was that of fire. The British Legation was peculiarly liable to this form of attack at three points. Behind the Chinese Secretary's house adjoining the wall were several Chinese houses. On the north the Hanlin Academy adjoined the Legation, and some of its halls were separated only by a few feet from the North Stables, the students' quarters, and the outbuildings of the Minister's house. Round the south-east corner of the Legation was a mass of Chinese houses hard by the stables, and exactly at the corner a small Chinese temple. The burning of any one of these places was a serious danger to the Legation, and the Chinese perceived this and immediately directed their attack upon them. In one of the yards behind Mr. Cockburn's there was still

standing a large p'êng. Chinese houses are all built in small quadrangles : to shelter these from the fierce summer sun they commonly put up a mat shed supported by poles, which covers the whole yard. These are called p'êng, and are naturally of a highly inflammable nature. It was frequently remarked that that shed, so close to the Secretary's house, was a source of great danger, and people wondered why the Legation authorities had not insisted on its removal ; but in fact the removal of the p'êng without the demolition of the houses would have been of little value, since the enemy had free access to the buildings. The existence of the p'êng only made their work a little more easy. About five o'clock in the afternoon they set fire to the shed, and presently the buildings were in flames. There followed a scene of the wildest excitement. Added to the noise, hurry, and confusion which naturally attend a fire was the quick report of the rifles. The enemy occupied the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and the shelter of the carriage park, and poured in upon us a continual storm of bullets, happily rather at random. Private Scadding was killed whilst on watch, but no one else was injured.

The Fire Committee were not yet well known to the majority of the defenders, and orders were given by anyone with a loud voice and an impression that he knew what ought to be done. The largest of the two small fire-engines in the Lega-

tion refused to work. Volunteers rushed hastily up and proceeded to pull down every scrap of wood-work out of the kitchens and outhouses adjoining the wall. For a time it looked as if the house was in serious danger. Some of us began to save the stores, the really valuable part of the property ; and soon bottles, tins, bags of flour, and every kind of stuff were collected in the front of the house. Then, whether by orders of some responsible officer or simply urged by their own zeal and anxiety to be doing something, I do not know, the crowd poured into the house. Curtains and pictures were torn from the walls by main force ; furniture, books, boxes, linen were heaped in confusion on the lawn. The very matting on the floor was dragged up, crumpled together, and bundled out into the yard. In an incredibly short space of time the house was stripped, and presented the appearance of having been looted by Boxers. It was very soon clear that all this havoc was really unnecessary, and we began the sorrowful work of trying to restore the house to something like its previous orderly condition ; but curtain-rods were broken, and nails dragged from the walls, and it was impossible to recover more than the shadow of past order. Luckily the study, which we used as a dining-room, was less disturbed than the other rooms of the house, and there we prepared a supper of tinned meats about nine o'clock ; but Mr.

Cockburn had scarcely sat down before he was called away to a committee meeting. He was worked to death at this time. Next day the Chinese servants, with their usual calm stoical disregard of minor discomforts, returned to the ruined kitchen, and served up meals as if nothing had happened. The cooking-stove was still there; what did it matter whether there were doors or windows?

The attempt to burn the Chinese Secretary's house convinced us of the necessity of taking speedy measures to avoid a similar danger in other quarters. Volunteers hastened to demolish the buildings which adjoined the south stables, particularly the small temple at the south corner. It is not an easy thing to pull down houses hurriedly without danger to the workmen; and scarcely any of the refugees had any clear idea how to set about the work. There were very few tools, only five axes and a few picks. Chinese houses are built on a framework of wooden pillars which support the roof, the walls being afterwards filled in with brick. The main object, then, was to cut through the pillars as far as was safe, and then with ropes to pull the whole building down with one crash. It was difficult and dangerous work. To take the houses to pieces, beginning at the top, with picks would have demanded days of labour. At this work no one was so conspicuous as Mr. Bailie, the Scotch Professor of English in the

Imperial Chinese University. He was physically very strong, and was pining for violent manual labour or bloodshed. Earlier in the siege he had been miserable because he had not a rifle or even a bayonet with which to maintain the defence. Then, when barricade-building became the order of the day, he turned out with the first. I think he rather enjoyed the opportunity of exerting his great strength. At demolishing houses he was invaluable. An axe in his hands did wonders. But he overworked himself in these first few days and was not so conspicuous during the later weeks of the siege.

At this time, then, everyone was intent on trying to secure the South Stables from fire. The Hanlin was considered safe. It was the home of the Doctors. In it that august body met. In its halls, adorned with memorial and literary tablets, was stored the first library in the Empire, a priceless collection of books and MSS. and State records. The place was sacred. No one could believe that the Chinese would dare to burn it, or would wish to to burn it if they dared. That the Emperor would fail to visit with condign punishment anyone who laid sacrilegious hands on its sacred halls seemed impossible. It was suggested that we should pull down one of the smaller buildings ; but the suggestion was rejected. The same sort of objections that had prevented the Ministers from rescuing the

Chinese Christians, and from making any preparations for attack by fortifying their Legations, prevented them now from touching the Hanlin. It would be an act of aggression ; it would enrage the people ; it would exasperate the Government. I believe that they did at last consent to the occupation of part of the Hanlin, and Captain Poole was preparing to enter the place when the Chinese anticipated us by setting fire to it. As usual throughout the siege, the people who had had least experience of China judged best. They were not hampered with precedents or theories concerning Chinese customs. The Hanlin was not to them a sacred place, but a building which might be dangerous to us. The experienced men trusted that the Chinese would respect their own traditions. The inexperienced looked upon them as a barbarian, the experienced as a civilised people. At this time the people acted as barbarians and set fire to the place. It was a monstrous deed. For a time the danger was very great ; there was a strong north wind blowing, and the burning buildings were close to the North Stables and the Minister's outhouses. Captain Poole breached the wall and cleared the halls at the head of a body of Marines and volunteers. Some of the Chinese were killed whilst trying to escape by the main entrance. Then the buildings were demolished, trees were cut down, and every effort made to prevent the fire from

spreading to the Legation. Mr. Tours, in spite of a sprained ankle, was very conspicuous at the head of the Fire Brigade. Yet it is doubtful whether all these efforts would have succeeded if the wind had not gradually died down and changed its direction. Men were discussing what we should do if the Minister's house caught fire. We should have been forced to abandon the Legation. No other was sufficiently large to accommodate the crowd of refugees. No other was so well supplied with water. We might have found it necessary to remove into the Fu, the only place capable of containing us. Happily, we were not driven to such desperate measures. The efforts of the Marines and volunteers succeeded in keeping out the fire; the back of the students' quarters, the outhouses, and the stables were charred and blackened, but never actually caught fire. We had occupied the great hall nearest to the Legation and this we held until the end of the siege. The British position on the north was not only saved, it was stronger than before.

It is interesting, almost amusing, to consider the action of the British in regard to the literary treasures of the Hanlin. At that moment of peril the volunteers not only considered their own salvation, they actually took steps to preserve some of the beautiful and priceless manuscripts stored in the halls, and Sir Claude MacDonald sent a message to the Tsungli

Yamên acquainting them with the state of affairs, and asking them to co-operate in the rescue of the archives, which their own people were wantonly destroying. Needless to say, they paid no attention to his message, and the efforts of the British were practically in vain. At such a moment no one had leisure to look carefully over the vast stores of books, to select, arrange, transport. Only a few fragments were collected and gathered into a place of security.

At the same time, fires were started in other places round the besieged quarter—one near the French Legation, another of great importance near the American Legation. There the Russo-Chinese Bank was fired, and the Americans, aided by Chinese Christians, who worked with great courage and devotion, had some difficulty in saving the Legation. The Legation Street, from the American Legation to the Ch'ien Mên, was destroyed.

In the afternoon, about 5 P.M., a new alarm of fire was raised in the Hanlin, and volunteers, who were again busy working at the South Stables, were called off once more to that quarter. But the fire was not serious, and soon all danger was past. Later in the evening I went up to view the ruins. In the alley behind the students' quarters were piled some volumes which had been saved in the morning. I could not get beyond the first court of the Hanlin, as the entrance had been already bricked up. The

fire was still burning on the other side of the wall, making a vast red glow against the deep blue of the Chinese evening sky. One great tree still stood, stretching its bare leafless arms to heaven. It was very dry and burnt like tinder, with no flame but a pure translucent glow, as if it had been cut out of a living ruby. In the East Court the small library was in ruins, the ornamental pool surrounding it was choked with *débris*; wooden printing-blocks, manuscripts, and books were lying scattered about, trampled into the mire. It was a sight to move pity even in the hearts of those who had been saved by the destruction.

During the day several wounded men had been brought into the Legation. The Chancery had been cleared and arranged as a temporary hospital. Miss Lambert, a trained nurse attached to the Anglican Mission, was matron. She was supported by a large number of ladies, most of them missionaries, amongst whom Deaconess J. M. Ransome, Dr. Saville, and a French Sister of Charity were conspicuous. It was a really delightful thing to see lady doctors ready and able to act as nurses. A doctor's training does not necessarily include the art of nursing; doctors often consider it *infra dignitatem* to nurse. Yet in Peking there were several lady doctors, who willingly put aside such scruples, and not only acted as nurses, but did the work exceedingly

well. Here, again, there was no petty jealousy ; all were ready to do what the situation demanded with all their might, and the patients reaped the benefit. The hospital kitchen was in charge of Miss Chapin, of T'ung Chou, who throughout the siege managed this most important part of the work with the utmost fidelity, patience, and ingenuity. At this early stage, whilst supplies were fairly abundant, it was not very exacting work, for there were on June 23 only eight patients in the hospital. But, as time went on, supplies ran short and patients multiplied, and it became a most trying and difficult task to supply the wounded with proper and varied food. No praise can be too great for the able and often curious way in which Miss Chapin accomplished this task. Day after day she devised all sorts of dishes out of the most meagre provisions, and seemed to defy the old proverb which asserts that you cannot make a silk purse unless you first acquire the requisite elements. The wounded were also happy in being under the charge of two such able surgeons as Dr. Poole, of the British Legation, and Dr. Velde, of the German. Both these men had seen war before, and had had experience in treating the wounded. Both were men of great skill, unsparing diligence, and cheerful sympathy. They were most ably supported by the sick-berth steward of H.M.S. 'Orlando,' whose efficient and devoted work has been repeatedly

mentioned both in official despatches and in the writings of all who have described the siege. Of this good man's untiring zeal and patience it would be impossible to speak too highly.

By way of hospital furniture the staff collected four small iron bedsteads and seven camp beds, which were distributed in the six wards. Later on in the siege the number of patients often amounted to fifty or sixty, and those for whom no beds could be found were accommodated with mattresses on the floor, which in itself was no great hardship, the only real objection to the plan being that it caused the nurses to stoop overmuch, and made it difficult to keep the floors clean. One of the greatest discomforts which troubled the wounded was the plague of mosquitoes and flies, which multiplied to an unusual extent, probably owing to the number of dead bodies lying about outside the lines. It was a real hardship to be deprived of a mosquito net, and many of the besieged displayed great generosity in giving up their nets to the hospital. With the help of some lace drawing-room curtains, which made a poor substitute but still were better than nothing, I believe the hospital was able to supply all its patients. Only those who have been kept awake all the early part of the night by mosquitoes, and all the later part of the night by flies, can have

any idea what it means to lie down at night with the certainty of being so annoyed.

Bed-linen was supplied mainly by the energy of Mrs. Conger, the American Minister's wife, and the ladies who lived in her house. One of the stores contained a few bales of calico, and this was cut up and made into sheets and pillow-cases. Bolsters and pillows were stuffed with the straw covers of wine-bottles, or cotton-wool. Of drugs, the dispensary in the British Legation contained a fair quantity, sufficient for ordinary times, and this, supplemented by the smaller stores of the other Legations, was made by some means to last till the end of the siege. The success of the hospital so managed was very great. Patients and visitors all agreed that it was a model of its kind. No one died of septic poisoning; indeed, nearly all the cases lost had received mortal wounds and died within a few hours of admission, and those who were still in the hospital when the relief force arrived received the news that they were to be moved into the Field Hospital with anything but delight.

On this day the firing became more furious. The enemy did not, indeed, make attacks in great force, but their sharpshooters, stationed in isolated and protected spots, kept up a continual fire and worried our men a good deal. Orders against the wasteful expenditure of ammunition were very strict, especially

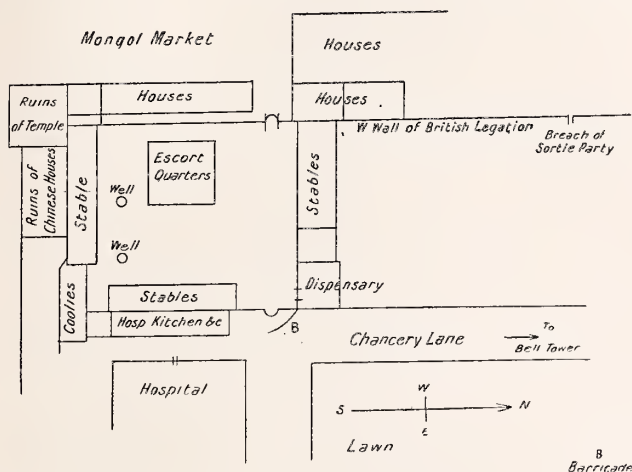
in the British Legation. No one was allowed to fire at flashes in the night, or indeed at any time, unless he could clearly see his man ; but, even so, there was great anxiety lest the supply should run short. On this day, too, for the first time we had experience of shell fire. The Chinese had mounted a gun at the Ch'ien Mên. One shell struck the American Legation, whilst others entered the German. But for the most part they were fired high, and sailed over our heads with a deep buzz. No one seemed in the least disturbed by them. They sounded as if they travelled very slowly, and there was a peculiar fascination which made people look up when they heard the sound to see if they could catch sight of the shell. But it was plainly necessary to occupy the wall to the west of the American Legation to prevent the enemy from planting guns directly over the Legations.

Early on Sunday morning we had quite a budget of rumours to discuss, some of which were thought worthy of being posted at the Bell Tower : *e.g.*, that the American sentries had seen one rocket in the west at 1 A.M., and another later ; that a pigeon carrying a letter had been seen near the hotel ; that the wall was lined with Chinese flags. All these were supposed to indicate the approach of a foreign force. Then the Americans and Germans went out to seize the wall opposite the American Legation.

The Germans had already occupied a position on the wall by their own Legation. They started from that point westwards towards the Ch'ien Mên, firing volleys, which, they said, worked terrible destruction. They said that there were 'millions' of Chinese on the wall, and that they advanced until they came to a barricade on which were mounted two guns in a position too strong to be attacked by so small a force of men (about thirty). How much of all this was true we could not tell; but the main fact was that they succeeded in sweeping the wall past the American Legation and establishing themselves there. They built a barricade across the wall just behind the Legation, and, to strengthen this, made great demands for sandbags, which caused the notice for divine service to be altered into one for the making of bags. The capture of this position was a fine performance, and greatly strengthened our defences.

About ten o'clock the alarm bell rang. The houses around the South Stables were on fire. As I have already pointed out, we had made some preparation to meet this danger; but the work was only half done, and a good many houses remained standing close to the stables. The house in the stable-yard had been originally built to accommodate the escort, but had long lain vacant, until the increasing number of Consular students

had overflowed the buildings designed for them in the north of the compound, and had forced some of them to occupy this house. Then, when the missionaries first came in, the students had given way for them, and later, after the receipt of the ultimatum, the upper story had been occupied by a Marine guard. It was a dangerous place, because



the houses on the opposite side of the Mongol Market had been loopholed, and the enemy kept up a continual fire upon the house from the shelter of those cottages. Just to the south of the house lay the temple and Chinese houses which we had been demolishing; to the north was a gate leading into the Mongol Market. This gate was made of

wood, and was used in times of peace to bring fodder, &c., into the stables. Close to it on the north-west were a number of Chinese houses adjoining the stables on that side of the yard. The enemy then set fire to the houses on the west of this quarter. There was a fresh westerly breeze blowing, and for a time the situation was an anxious one.

The battle raged round the gate into the market. The enemy advanced close to the wall of the Legation, set up their flag there, and poured in a continual shower of bullets through the burning houses. If the door had fallen, they would have been able to fire straight into the yard, even if they were not tempted to charge at the open way. On our side, volunteers began with all haste to pull down the stables nearest to the door and to build up behind it a strong brick wall six or eight feet thick. The door was already on fire; some deluged it with water, whilst others worked in the blinding smoke building for dear life. In pulling down the stables Mr. Norris was accidentally hit on the head by a Russian with a pickaxe. Forgetful in the excitement of the moment that the man knew no English, Mr. Norris called out to him: 'If you are going to use your pickaxe like that, let me first clear out.' At the next blow the implement slipped from the man's hands and knocked Mr. Norris over. But he was not seriously injured, and con-

tinued all the morning labouring at the wall behind the burning gate.

Meanwhile Captain Halliday, with a party of Marines, went out by a breach in the wall to the north and charged through the burning houses to clear out the enemy. He received a dangerous shot through the shoulder. In spite of this he maintained his stand and cheered on his men, and when forced to retire did so unaided to avoid drawing away others from the ranks to attend to him. For this gallant conduct he has since been rewarded with the Victoria Cross. One of the Marines, Private Sawyer, was wounded in the groin, and subsequently died. But they did their work. The enemy were driven out. The wall was built up inside the door, and by one o'clock all danger was over. The fire in the south corner, thanks to the energy which the volunteers had previously used in demolishing the temple and neighbouring houses, was never serious. It is a singular thing, worthy of remark, that the efforts of the besieged were again supported by a change in the wind, which materially helped them in keeping out the fire. Thus within three days the enemy had destroyed every building sufficiently near to us to endanger our safety. After this attempt, until the day of relief, we suffered no more anxiety on the score of fire. The ground all round the Legation was clear. What we should otherwise

have had to do with great labour was done for us in a few hours by the enemy, and we were left free to construct barricades and other works of defence.

The attitude of the Chinese Government, and the motives by which it was inspired at this time, will be most clearly demonstrated by two edicts which were afterwards brought into the Legation. The first, dated June 21, said :

Ever since the foundation of the Dynasty foreigners coming to China have been kindly treated. In the reign of Tao Kuang and Hsien Fêng they were allowed to trade, and they also asked leave to propagate their religion, a request which the Throne reluctantly granted. At first they were amenable to Chinese control, but for the past thirty years they have taken advantage of China's forbearance to encroach on her territory, to trample on her people, and to demand her wealth. Every concession made by China increased their reliance on violence. They oppressed peaceful citizens, and insulted the gods and holy men, exciting the most burning indignation among the people. Hence the burning of chapels and the slaughter of converts by the patriotic braves. The Throne was anxious to avoid war, and issued edicts enjoining protection of the Legations and mercy to the converts. The decrees declaring Boxers and converts to be equally the children of the State were issued in the hope of removing the old feud between people and converts ; and extreme kindness was shown to the strangers from afar. But these people knew no gratitude and increased their pressure. A despatch was yesterday sent by the French Admiral, calling on us to deliver up the Taku Forts into their keeping, otherwise they would be taken by

force. These threats showed their aggression. In all matters relating to international intercourse we have never been wanting in courtesies to them; but they, while styling themselves civilised States, have acted without regard for right, relying solely on their military force. We have now reigned nearly thirty years and have treated the people as our children, the people honouring us as their deity; and in the midst of our reign we have been the recipients of the gracious favour of the Empress Dowager. Furthermore, our ancestors have come to our aid, and the gods have answered our call; and never has there been so universal a manifestation of loyalty and patriotism. With tears have we announced the war in the ancestral shrines. Better to do our utmost and enter on the struggle than seek some means of self-preservation involving eternal disgrace. All our officials, high and low, are of one mind; and there have assembled without official summons several hundred thousand patriotic soldiers (*i.e.* Boxers), even children carrying spears in the service of the country. Those others rely on crafty schemes; our trust is in Heaven's justice. They depend on violence; we on humanity. Not to speak of the righteousness of our cause, our provinces number more than twenty, our people over 400,000,000, and it will not be difficult to vindicate the dignity of our country.

The decree concludes by promising heavy rewards to those who distinguish themselves in battle, or subscribe funds, and threatening punishment to those who show cowardice or act treacherously.

The second, dated June 24, appointed members of the Imperial clan to act as leaders of the Boxer volunteers. It said :

Numbers of our people comprised in the I Hê T'uan are scattered in all parts of the region round the metropolis and Tientsin; and it is right and proper that they should have superintendents placed over them. We appoint Prince Chuang (Tsai Hsün) and the Assistant Grand Secretary, Kang I, to be in general command; and also order Ying Nien, Brigade-General of the left wing, and Tsai Lan, temporarily acting as Brigade-General of the right wing, to act in co-operation with them. We command Wên Jui, Adjutant-General of the Manchu Army, to be Brigadier-General. All the members of the I Hê T'uan are exerting their utmost energies, and the Imperial Family must not fall behind in harbouring revenge against our enemies. It is our confident hope that the desires of each and all will be successfully consummated, and it is of the utmost importance that no lack of energy be shown.

Inspired by such pronouncements of the Throne, it was no wonder if the Boxers were encouraged to use all possible means to effect the destruction of their enemies.

CHAPTER VI

THE ATTACK OF THE IMPERIAL TROOPS

II. THE BOMBARDMENT: JUNE 24—JULY 16

THE danger of fires over, it remained to be seen whether the Chinese would be able to break a way into the Legations by assault, or to render them untenable by shell fire. The first attempt at assault was made in the Fu and ended disastrously. It was said that the Japanese, who defended that quarter, deliberately let the enemy in. Whether this was so or not, it is certain that they regretted their haste. They found themselves caught in an angle of the wall, whilst the Japanese kept up a heavy fire upon them from their loopholes. It was said that a good many were killed, and it has further been argued that their failure to take advantage of mistakes made by some of the forces in retiring from their posts later on in the siege was due to the fear of being again caught in such a trap. In the evening, however, they succeeded in accomplishing by fire what they had failed to effect by assault. They threw fireballs

into one of the buildings in that quarter of the Fu, and the Chinese Christians were forced to retire, and were placed in houses between the British and Russian Legations.

From this time the whole strength of the garrison, supported by the indispensable coolie labour of the native Christians, was directed to strengthening our barricades.

On June 24 we were barricading the lower verandah on the south side of the First Secretary's house. Life there was becoming dangerous. Several bullets had found their way in : one had pierced a hat hanging on a peg a foot or two above one of the missionaries' beds, and some of the people were feeling nervous. Life on that verandah was comparatively comfortable, but most people were beginning to long for a good bath and a clean bed. The stone floor of the verandah was thick with dust, and mattresses and everything else spread on the floor were very dirty. No one had more than a wash-hand basin full of water, and all ablutions were done more or less in public. Still, that was a private and secluded life compared with the unhappy condition of the poor people in the T'ing'rh in front of the Minister's house, where men, women, and children were herded together, and no one could get even a sponge-down throughout the siege. The great alleviation of our lot was the extraordinary coolness

of the weather. The breezes, which had added to the danger of fire, had preserved us from stifling heat, and the nights had been so cool as to make a blanket welcome.

The demand for sandbags was very great. Sandbags were wanted everywhere—on the wall round the Legation, at the American barricade on the Tartar wall, in the Fu. In the afternoon men, women, children, and coolies were all at work in the pit where once was Mr. Cockburn's garden. The roof of his house was our best outlook station on the west, and a regular little fort was built there, protected with sandbags. Sandbags were made of every conceivable material—silks, satin, foreign trouserings out of the tailor's shop, sheets, tablecloths, curtains. The ladies were hard at work all day and every day sewing at these indispensable means of defence. They only stopped when the fire-bell called all hands to pass water-buckets at a fire.

In the morning two ponies shot during the night were cut up and distributed. This was our first experience of the pony meat which was to form a staple of our living for the next six weeks. There was much jesting over it. Everybody was anxious to know the history, name, and achievements of the meal; but later on we got quite callous, and only a few who had equine friends were nervous and unhappy. One lady of my acquaintance never failed to ask,

‘Is it a white mule?’ If the answer were ‘No,’ all went well. Many people could not distinguish the taste from that of beef, others vowed it was venison. It made splendid soup; but for the rest it was undoubtedly better cooked up in a minced form, as curry or rissoles, than in the joint, which was apt to be hard and close.

In the afternoon the firing, which had been fairly brisk all day, suddenly ceased. A man bearing a white flag was seen to advance on to the North Bridge with a board on which, in Chinese characters, was written the legend: ‘Imperial command to protect the Ministers and to stop firing. A despatch will be sent to the bridge of the Imperial Canal.’ We sent out an answer, to the effect that we were ready to receive any communication from the Government; but no answer was received. There was great excitement and much speculation in the Legation concerning this action on the part of the Chinese. As usual, the expectations of the many immediately turned to relief, and they argued that the force must be near at hand, and that the Government was trying at the last moment to save the situation. Others inclined to the view that it was a mere trap intended to throw us off our guard. The most experienced argued that it was simply another phase of the vacillating policy which the Government had pursued throughout—protecting the foreigners

to-day to save face in the sight of Europe, encouraging the Boxers to-morrow to satisfy the anti-foreign virulence of Prince Tuan and his party. It probably meant that Prince Ch'ing, aided by Jung Lu, had for the moment persuaded the distracted Empress of the madness of attacking Legations sacred in the eyes of Europe, and of attempting to wage war against the united Powers of the world. To judge by the results, as in the case of the Hanlin, so here, the experienced were again wrong and the inexperienced right. It was reported that the author of 'Chinese Characteristics' replied to one who went to him as an authority with the question, 'Well, what will the Chinese do now?' 'Don't ask *me* about the Chinese; *I* know nothing whatever about them.'

Whatever the private opinion of the authorities may have been, their action was sufficiently sound. Here was no question of offending the Government or of encroaching upon rights: it was a mere question of defence. Whatever might be the meaning of the placard, there could be no harm in preparing for the worst. The quiet interval was diligently employed in strengthening barricades and piling sand-bags in dangerous places. The watch was strengthened. The event fully justified these precautions. At midnight we were aroused by a most furious attack. From every quarter at once a hail of bullets was

poured over us. To the uninitiated it sounded as if every rifle in the city was being fired as rapidly as possible. Nearly everyone turned out; but it was no good to get up and run about the compound, simply because all the world was excited. There was nothing to be done. The Marines lay behind their barricades and waited till the storm was over, and civilians not on duty did wisely to imitate their example under their sheets. In about an hour it was over.

The Chinese had also made good use of the interval granted by the publication of the Imperial decree. They had built a barricade across the Legation Street facing that which joined the Russian to the American Legation, and others in different places. The siege was growing closer, and the time was not far off when the soldiers would be throwing brickbats at one another across the barricades.

Next day (June 26) conversation still ran on the relief, based upon the belief that the notice posted the day before implied that it was not far off. There was a report in the morning that Colonel Shiba had seen a Japanese rocket in the north. I noted this report as being of peculiar interest, because a man of his experience might be expected to know his own rockets; but, if one had judged by reported rockets, the conclusion would have been that the Allies were trying to take Peking as the Israelites took Jericho,

by walking round it. Later in the morning it was said that large bodies of Tung Fu Hsiang's troops had been seen moving north, and that again tended to raise people's hopes ; but wise men argued that, if the allied forces had taken the Taku Forts last Monday week (June 18), they might have got to Tientsin on Tuesday, the 19th. Then they would have to pacify Tientsin and make great preparations before they could advance, since we knew that Admiral Seymour found the water supply difficult. Then they must be allowed at least five or six days to get to Peking, even if they were not delayed by serious opposition : if they had to follow the course of the river in order to get water they certainly could not do the journey in less. Thus the earliest date at which they could possibly be expected would be Thursday, the 28th. How ludicrous that argument now sounds in the light of later knowledge of the real events !

After the excitement of the night attack the day seemed singularly quiet. There was a great scarcity of coolies. We had lent so many to other Legations that we had scarcely any to do our own work, and things were rather at a standstill. We were all beginning to realise the necessity of providing bomb-proof shelters for the women and children. Shells were continually passing overhead and bursting round us, and the danger might at any moment grow acute. The barricade at the front gate had

been roofed in, and we were busy piling up earth upon it to make it bomb-proof. At this time, too, we were suffering from the stench which arose from the rotting carcasses of some ponies which had strayed down the canal and been shot. We went out to try to bury one or two of these, but had to relinquish the task after covering one with earth, as the others were in too exposed a position. Dogs and pigs were already eating those which had fallen on the North Bridge, but they did not come down the road to remove those nearer to us. When a north-east wind blew the stench was intolerable.

On the following day (June 27) the enemy made three attacks upon us—one at 3 A.M., another about 3 P.M., the third at 10.30 P.M. The alarm bell was rung to call out the volunteers, but we suffered no serious loss. The interesting thing about all the attacks was that they were evidently made on a preconcerted plan, not at the motion of separate parties of Boxers or troops, because the firing began from all points at once at a given signal. This had been noticed often enough before, but its repetition confirmed the conviction that the attacking force was made up of regulars and volunteers well under the control of their officers, rather than the disorganised mob and mutinous troops which the Government would have us believe. The men, however, seemed for the

most part to fire quite at random, and storms of bullets flew high over our heads. It was curious to speculate where they all went: one would naturally suppose that scores of innocent people in the city must have been hit by stray shots. There were many conjectures as to the cause of this ridiculous waste of ammunition. One, mentioned by Dr. Morrison in his account of the siege in the 'Times,' was that the soldiers wanted to kill, or rather frighten away, the devils which protected the Legations, just as they fire off crackers to drive away evil spirits at any festival or leave-taking. Another theory, started, I believe, by Dr. Coltman, was much more worldly-minded. It was that the soldiers emptied their cartridges in order to sell the brass cases. It was said that, when first the troops were supplied with foreign weapons and ammunition, they used to empty the powder out of their cartridges for the same purpose, and the practice became so universal that it had to be made a capital offence. But the refutation of this theory lay on the surface, the ground outside the Legation barricades being littered with cartridge-cases, which the Chinese had not taken the trouble to carry away. A most interesting solution was suggested by Mr. Cockburn. He said that in 1881, when China seemed to be on the eve of war with Russia, Gordon wrote a memorandum advising the Chinese how to meet the

foreigner. He told them in that paper to avoid meeting the enemy in the open, but to worry them night and day, especially by making as much noise as possible at night, in order to keep them continually on the strain, for he said that the demoralisation produced by anxiety and want of rest would be of greater service to the Chinese than many victories.

It certainly did seem as if the Chinese were making full use of that advice on the present occasion, for the most serious effect of their incessant attacks was the annoyance which they caused the more nervous of the besieged. One of the ladies, and one of the most courageous, who never allowed her nerves to hinder her work, told me that the crack of the rifles so affected her that she could scarcely bear it; and whilst we were sitting at dinner in comparative silence she said that the sound was still ringing in her ears, so that she felt as if it would drive her crazy. No doubt a good many people suffered in this way, and such a continued strain was very exhausting, especially since it prevented them from sleeping at night, and so they could not get even that rest in peaceful intervals which others enjoyed. But of course the majority, especially men who were working hard, soon grew accustomed to the sound, and found that they could sleep serenely in the midst of the fiercest attacks. Groping one's way at night through the Fu, one stumbled against Marines lying

in the trenches, who took no heed whatever of casual kicks, still less of rifle-shots, which were not directly addressed to them.

Happily we did not have much trouble from shells. A few sailed over the Legation and burst somewhere in the East City, but they did not alarm us. At this time only one of the bomb-proof shelters was finished. Two or three others were in course of construction, but had not been roofed in. The order of the day was that every house was to provide its own shelter, and consequently the houses in which men abounded were provided with these luxuries earliest. But they were horrid places—simply shallow pits four or five feet deep roofed with boards and covered with a few feet of earth. For women and children to have been compelled to huddle together in them even for a few hours would have been utterly miserable. When rain fell it naturally ran into these holes and covered the floor with water. Many ladies declared that they did not fear shells, but they did fear the shelters, and would not be drowned and stifled in those dens. It was impossible to dispute the justice of their argument. Everyone was glad that they were never tempted to disobey orders to take shelter.

June 27 was a furiously hot day. The sun blazed upon us out of a perfect blue sky. Working in the open at midday was almost an impossibility for

Europeans. The sun seemed to hit one as one stooped to lift bricks or sandbags, and one felt that in another moment one would go down headlong. Ladies made puggarees of unbleached calico to sew on the helmets of the Marines and the Terai hats of the civilians, but even with such protection it was difficult to work hard and steadily. It was a wonder that we had no cases of sunstroke in the hospital. I suppose most men worked either under shelter or gave up the attempt until midday was past and long shadows fell from the houses. Mr. Gamewell, who had been everywhere, overseeing every part of the fortifications, strong as he seemed, looked fagged, and admitted with the remnants of a voice that he was suffering from cholera morbus. Many others were not much better. Even the Chinese coolies complained of the heat, and tried to escape from their tasks. They were, many of them, men unused to hard manual labour, house servants, clerks, teachers, preachers, doctors' assistants, and they could not stand the strain. It was a difficult task to keep them together. One started from the Bell Tower with a gang of ten or twenty to find after half an hour's work that only seven or fifteen remained. But it was idle to pity them: the work had to be done somehow. Often a gang of little boys for the light labour of picking up bricks to build barricades was more easily handled than a

gang of grown men. These little children did a lot of good work in a small way. They could rush about the compound with a 'ricksha piled with half a dozen bags, doing many trips in comparatively short time, whilst grown men laboriously filled a long cart with twenty or thirty and slowly hauled it to its destination. And they seemed to enjoy the work, and did not run away. But then, of course, they got regular meals and light work, and did not stay out all night digging and building.

Even with the best coolies it was not easy to do good work. A man who has never done any manual labour does not always find that he knows at once by the light of nature how to build a good wall of loose bricks and earth, any more than he knows how to pull down a house. This was one of the points where Mr. Norris' capacity displayed itself. He not only would but could build. The Marines said of him that he was a man who feared neither bullets, devils, nor stinks; others noticed that his barricades were straight, upright, and strong. No wonder that Mr. Gamewell valued his aid!

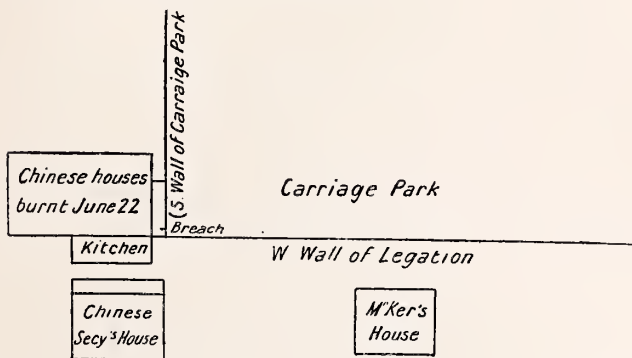
That night occurred what was to me one of the most amusing incidents in the siege, and I nearly made myself the laughing-stock of the guard. I was on watch in the stable-yard from 12.30 to 3 A.M., unarmed, with orders to call up the guard in the stable-house if anything occurred. It was

fairly quiet until about 2.30, when suddenly I heard three tremendous crashing blows against a stable-door on the south side of the yard, and the door was dashed out into the yard. I had imagined the stable to be empty, and leaped to the conclusion that the enemy had broken through the outer wall without my perceiving it, and were breaking down the door with a battering-ram. Luckily I had sense enough to dodge round the corner and watch to see what came out before I called the guard. Dead silence ensued, and I went up quietly to investigate. It was only a pony which had taken it into its head to kick the door down. So I called a stable-boy instead of the guard and made him fix the thing for the night. But I might easily have given myself away, and disturbed the Marines, who needed all the sleep they could get, by a false alarm.

In the course of the day the official census was posted at the Bell Tower. There were then in the Legation, not counting the Marine guard, 191 men, 147 women, 76 children, in all 414 foreigners, in a compound measuring about 300 yards by 100 yards, containing a dozen houses and a chapel. In the other Legations and the hotel were 54 men, 2 women—Madame von Rosthorn, the wife of the Austrian Chargé d’Affaires, and Madame Chamot, of the hotel, who stood by their husbands throughout the siege—

and 3 children. Thus, there were in the defended area 473 foreigners besides the Marines.

Next day (June 28) a strange report went round the Legation that a Chinese had ridden out of the city as far as T'sai Yü and returned, saying that he had met all the Boxers fleeing north from fear of the foreign troops. But when search was made the man could not be found. He seemed to have disappeared. However, the report gave much food for conversation and discussion.



The most urgent piece of work was the piercing of the south wall of the Carriage Park in order to enfilade the long west wall. It was said that the enemy were mining under the wall, and doing other fearsome things, and we had no point of vantage from which to keep watch upon any tricks which they might play at the foot of the wall. It was therefore decided to cut through the wall to the

south, behind the Chinese Secretary's house, and to place a sentry there. It was a stifling day; the space between the south wall of the Carriage Park and the north wall of the Chinese houses was barely four feet. The fire was still smouldering in the Chinese houses, and the wall was quite hot. The wind was in the north-east, and the stink of the dead horses in the canal was distinctly unpleasant. Work under such circumstances was not very enjoyable. Only one man at a time could pick at the wall, and even one man had not room to strike a good blow. Moreover, we soon found that the wall was very old, strongly built, and that it is not easy to make a neat hole in a wall six feet thick without bringing down more bricks than one desires about one's head. The work made slow progress, and was not finished that day, and I do not know if it ever was finished.

In the afternoon the enemy mounted a gun on their barricade in the Mongol Market about 200 yards from the west gate of the stable-yard of which I have already spoken, and proceeded to shell the stable-house. Four shells in succession crashed into the upper story of the house, drove out the guard, and brought the building to the verge of falling. Several shells burst over the hospital; a pony was killed just outside, but no one was injured. The Marines on guard kept up a careful fire upon the

gunners, and the attack ceased—why, it is difficult to understand. The Chinese must have seen that they were doing great damage to the stable-house, and under the shelter of their barricade they were in comparative safety. But, happily for us, they did cease firing. Later in the evening they fired again upon the door of the stable-yard, which, as I have already explained, we had strengthened with six feet of brick. Finding that they could make no impression, they again ceased firing; but had they aimed at the wall on either side of the gate they must certainly have breached it, as there was then no backing to the wall, and the building itself was only broken brick and mud, and that not very thick.

In the French Legation the besieged had to meet a strong attack. The Chinese barricades were already so close to the French position that the Austrian Chargé d’Affaires, M. von Rosthorn, and his wife, who were fighting in the line, actually attempted to set them on fire by throwing on them straw dipped in kerosene, whilst the Chinese responded with a shower of stones, by some of which Madame von Rosthorn was wounded. The courage of this lady was most astonishing. She also might be said to fear neither fires, devils, nor stinks.

The approach of the Chinese gun to such close quarters was too serious a thing to be passed over

in silence; the danger to the west wall was too pressing. It was resolved to send out a party to attempt to capture it. About three o'clock in the morning they assembled at the Bell Tower, about forty Marines of all nations and a few volunteers. Absolute silence was the order of the day; but absolute silence was not observed on this occasion. There was in the Legation a Norwegian missionary, who had already distinguished himself on several occasions, particularly on the first Sunday of the siege, when he preached an eloquent sermon in English to the French who were camped in the great T'ing'rh in front of the Minister's house. He was a curious person, given to strange fancies, and was commonly regarded as a lunatic, whose vagaries might be passed over with amused silence. He seized this opportunity to air his woes. Seeing a large body of men collected at the Bell Tower, he came out, and with many gesticulations began to cry for justice. Some one, he said, had been speaking ill of him and taking away his good name. The more men tried to pacify him, the more excited he got. He shouted, he howled, he appealed to King Oscar and the whole of his royal family to right his wrongs. Nothing would quiet him; at last he was gagged and taken away struggling and stifling.

After this little episode men turned again to business. The design was for the Marines to go

out first, the civilians behind, to set fire to the houses in the Mongol Market, from the shelter of which the enemy kept up a continual fire upon our sentries. The whole thing was a ridiculous *fiasco*. The civilians, who went out last, knew their way and got ahead of the Marines. The soldiers, lost in a rabbit warren of cottages, did not know which way to turn, and found themselves in a maze of blind alleys. The Chinese did not run, as had been expected, but fired steadily from their loopholes. The result, as described by one of the British Marines, has been already quoted by Dr. Morrison. 'The Cap'en, he sez, garn boys, garn ; chawge, boys, chawge, against the bloomin' ouse wall ; 'e waves 'is bloomin' arms in the air and then 'e sets fire to the bloomin' ouse be'ind us.' The story went the round of the Legation and caused infinite merriment. Nothing was done, and how all our men returned safely after such a storm of random firing it was difficult to understand. But the gun was gone, and was never brought back to that barricade. Thus ended one of the most dangerous episodes in the siege and one of the most strange. That the Chinese should take up so strong a position, make so much use of it for an hour as to put us all in jeopardy, and then withdraw at the moment when they were doing serious damage, and afterwards make no attempt to renew the struggle at that point, raises a question to which it

is impossible to find a satisfactory answer. The real solution probably lies in the deep unfathomed abyss of Chinese mind and policy. Is it possible that, finding that their gun could make no impression on the old burnt door, they decided that the gods of the foreign devil were too strong for them in that quarter and retired before a superstitious fear of foreign sorcery? It is almost incredible that they removed the gun in terror at a sortie from which they did not run away, and which was such an utter failure that the besieged did not even succeed in setting fire to houses of any strategic importance.

Day broke hot and sultry and trying to everyone after the disappointment of the early morning. The people in the hospital were particularly troubled by the heat and close atmosphere of the small wards. The windows were of necessity blocked with sandbags, and the front verandah was also protected with a barricade of brick, earth, and sandbags. This, whilst it protected the wounded from shot and shell, kept out the air, and the rooms became painfully hot and unpleasant. We tried to obviate this difficulty by taking out the glass of the upper frames of the windows, and succeeded to a certain extent, but it was impossible to get all the ventilation that was desirable. There was also some anxiety to get the bomb-proof shelters finished, and a certain amount

of work was done at them; but everyone was feeling depressed and weary. Mr. Gamewell was almost voiceless, but still pursued his weary round of the Legation on his bicycle, overseeing the fortifications, and carrying out every suggestion of the military council with untiring zeal.

All day the French Legation was the object of a fierce attack. A midshipman, M. Herbert, was killed, a large part of the Legation was burnt, and the defenders were being driven back step by step in spite of their utmost efforts to maintain the fight. M. Pichon has recorded how on that day Lieutenant Darcy brought his report: 'Situation très grave, mais non désespérée.' They were fighting an uphill battle, and it needed such spirit to maintain the struggle at all.

In the American Legation Dr. Lippett was hit in the thigh by a bullet whilst talking to Mr. Conger: in the British, a Marine was wounded just outside the hospital, and a fragment of a shell went through Private Sawyer's mosquito curtains; but for the rest the day passed without any serious alarm until night fell. About 9 P.M. a heavy thunderstorm came on. It was a traditional belief that the Chinese would never fight in a storm. The Chinese dread of getting wet can only be compared to that of cats. A storm of rain is a sufficient excuse for any Chinese to break any engagement. Indeed, if rain falls, he

does not think it necessary to make any excuse ; he knows he will not be expected. But on this occasion, as on every other in the history of the siege, the Chinese falsified all judgment founded upon precedent. Rain fell in torrents, and flooded the paths. I kept watch that night in the stable-yard, huddled in a blanket under the projecting eaves of the stables. It was indeed a weird scene. The yard was full of water, the rain pouring down in torrents, the night dark as pitch. Flashes of lightning of splendid brilliancy from time to time lit up the yard as if it were broad daylight, and kept one straining one's eyes into the darkness waiting for the next moment of glory, when the effort to take in every point in the picture in the twinkling of an eye was almost painful in its intensity. Over the wall to the south the smouldering of the ruined burnt houses made a dull red glow invisible on a clearer night. The thunder pealed overhead, crash upon crash, ending in long deep reverberating growls ; whilst on all sides the sharp crack of the rifles and the terrible bang of the heavier guns kept up ceaselessly a deafening noise, so that I thought that the enemy might have battered down the barricade without my perceiving it. In the narrow yard the echo multiplied the mingled crash of thunder and guns twenty-fold. I saw a flash on one side, I heard a report on all sides. It was only by an intellectual argument correcting

the evidence of my senses that I could persuade myself that the enemy was not firing from every side, behind as well as before me. In the intervals between the peals of thunder bullets sped over my head with every variety of song. I amused myself with counting these, and trying to fix to each its proper name : a fierce swish, a long sighing hiss, a terrible ping ; some made no sound until a crack and a splintered tile or falling twigs showed where they struck. Just before I went off guard I heard the sergeant upstairs in the house say something about a light to the officer of the watch, who was making his rounds, and then when he had passed the sergeant came down and told us that he had seen a searchlight five or six miles away to the south. He said that he had pointed it out to the captain and the other men, and that they had all seen it, but that it was a poor light and certainly conveyed no message. That seemed to us the best news we had heard for many days. It was difficult to believe that three or four men, especially men who were well accustomed to the use of the search, could all see a light and mistake it for a searchlight, unless there was something in it. But repeated disappointment was making us sceptical, and not too ready to accept the promise of speedy relief.

Next day (July 1) there arose much speculation over the report of the light. Sir Claude himself examined

into it and seemed to think it might be true. But opinions differed to an extraordinary degree as to its distance: some men said five miles, some thirty. Then Mr. Tweed, of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, said that he and Mr. Hillier had last year frequently seen a similar light to the south. So we decided for the most part that it was probably a Chinese light. Later in the morning those who argued that the light was really a foreign searchlight thought to find some confirmation for their view from a report sent down from the Germans on the wall that large bodies of troops had been seen moving towards the Ha Ta Mên, and that both that gate and the Ch'ien Mên were being barricaded by the Chinese.

But any hopes which these reports raised were dashed by the disasters which fell upon us next day. The Chinese seemed to be concentrating their attack upon the barricades on the Tartar wall. On the east the Germans still held their position, but it was becoming daily more dangerous. The Chinese had advanced their works to within 100 yards of the German barricade and mounted a gun, the shells from which burst over the barricade. It was difficult to send up reinforcements, for the approach to the wall was undefended, and the relieving guard was exposed to heavy rifle fire on its way thither. In one day four men were killed and six wounded at this dangerous outpost. On the west the American

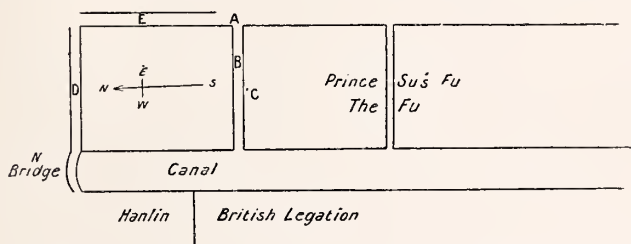
barricade was open to attack from the Chinese guns at the Ch'ien Mên, and the Russo-Chinese Bank was occupied by the enemy. On the night of June 30 the Chinese threw up a new barricade close to the American. It was a dark night, and an American sentry told me that he saw no one until he discovered a low row of bricks near him, which grew slowly and mysteriously higher and higher, the Chinese lying behind it and laying brick on brick, so that nothing ever showed above the wall. In the morning there was a finished barricade within a few feet of the American position.

The meaning of this double approach to the defences on the wall was soon made clear. The Americans suddenly saw the Chinese leaping over the German barricade, and, finding their own rear exposed to the enemy's attack, decided that they could not hold out alone and hurriedly left their post. It appeared that the Chinese had swarmed up the ramp in the early morning, surprised the German guard, and forced it to retire. This was a grave mistake ; at all hazards it was necessary to hold the wall. To abandon it meant that the Chinese could fire straight into the American Legation, render it untenable, plant guns on the wall, and demolish the whole quarter. A council of war was hastily called at the British Legation. Reinforcements were sent out, with orders to retake the position. Captain

Myers at once led a body of Marines, American, British, and Russian, and reoccupied the barricade about 10.30. The Chinese had lost their opportunity.

Then arose a great demand for sandbags to strengthen their position. For the second time in the siege Church services were put off and all hands called out to labour at the task of filling sandbags. We worked at it nearly all day and must have sent out a great number. I should be afraid to guess how many, for we not only supplied the Americans, but also greatly strengthened some of our own positions. There was no very heavy firing and we could work in peace, but the retirement of the Germans had depressed people's spirits, and many were especially moved by the death of Mr. Wagner, who fell in the French Legation in the morning. There the Chinese had fired a gun from the Customs Lane through a breach in the wall. Wagner was killed by the bursting of the shell, and the French guards were driven back into the hotel. But their retirement was only momentary, and they again returned to their barricades. The death of Wagner, however, threw a gloom over the whole community. He was the son of a former Consul-General at Shanghai, and was then serving in the Customs under Sir Robert Hart. He was buried in the British Legation in the afternoon, and a large concourse of people followed his body to the grave.

The depression caused by this misfortune was still further increased by the failure of a sortie which was made about four in the afternoon. To the north-east of the Fu the Chinese had planted a gun which was annoying us considerably. The Italian Captain Paolini proposed to attempt the capture of this gun with the aid of the Japanese. It was difficult to find out exactly what the plan was, but the Italian Captain was evidently much mistaken in his design and ignorant of some of the plain facts of the



situation. The gun was supposed to be situated at the north-east corner of the Fu (point A in the plan). The Japanese were to make their way round to the south-east of the position, whilst the Italians, supported by a few Austrians and British volunteers, went round and attacked it from the north. The general impression seemed to be that they ought to have gone down the canal to the North Bridge, up the main road to the east, D, and then south by a lane, E. But in fact they all rushed up

the first little lane at the corner of the Fu and found themselves in face of a barricade, B, eight feet high, loopholed above and below, from which they were exposed to a deadly fire. It was impossible to assault the barricade. Happily, there was hard by a hole in the wall, C, from which an attempt had previously been made to enter the lane, sufficiently wide for one man to pass easily, two to squeeze. The Italians rushed as one man for that hole and fought their way in. They all had fixed bayonets, and it was a marvel that they did not kill one another in that struggle for life. Captain Paolini was wounded, two Marines killed by the fire from the barricade. The British volunteers, Consular students, behaved with extraordinary steadiness and courage. The wall of one of the houses on the side opposite the manhole projected slightly into the lane. At a word they all lined up with their backs against the wall under the shelter of this house. Then, when the Italians were all out of the way, one by one they dashed across the road. Russell, Bristow, Flaherty, and Hancock got across safely; Bristow even had the hardihood to pick up a rifle which one of the Italians had dropped in the road. Townsend, the last to cross, was hit in the shoulder and the leg. Two of these brave men succumbed later. Townsend, though his wounds were not serious, yet was worn with the excitement and privations of

the siege, and did not recover speedily, and after the relief was sent to Japan to recruit. He was seized with typhoid and died at Yokohama, a sad loss to the British Legation, for he was not only a brave but a good man. Hancock went through the siege unscathed, but fell a victim to disease later in the year. Meanwhile the Japanese had forced their way north, losing one man killed and two wounded ; then, finding their position untenable, they retired. Thus, by this futile attempt we had gained absolutely nothing and had lost three men killed and four wounded.

No incident in the siege aroused such consternation and indignation in the British Legation. Everyone was furious at the madness of making such an attempt without proper knowledge of the enemy's position ; everyone was distressed by the loss of so many good men. The hospital in the Chancery was getting uncomfortably full. I went round to help to serve midday dinner and supper, and found it quite a serious occupation. There were between forty and fifty patients. The nurses seemed glad of help ; but Miss Lambert was in her glory. She was, by training and instinct, a hospital nurse, but ever since she joined the Mission she had been continually engaged with private cases. To be in a hospital once again seemed to be a real joy to her, and she did not suffer, as some suffered, from the noise of the incessant bombardment. But all the

nurses were overworked. It was one thing to work in the open air at barricade-building, and to return dirty and weary, but hungry and sleepy, to eat heartily and sleep soundly; it was quite another to stand about all day in the heated and stifling air of the hospital, stooping over the sick, making beds, running hither and thither to tend to one and another at every call, and to return worn but without appetite for the eternal bread, rice, and horse, weary but sleepless, at the mercy of every mosquito or fly, at a season when mosquitoes abounded, and flies, multiplying in the dead carcasses, had become a veritable plague. If men who worked at the barricades were worthy of honour, the ladies who continued day after day to labour in the hospital were worthy of double honour.

During the night the 'searchlight' appeared once more to the south. I was again on watch in the stable-yard, and went up into the house to see it. It looked like a poor searchlight directed at the stars, and was certainly an artificial light, but how far away I could not guess. I should have said not very far; but as a layman I did not think that I had any right to an opinion on things military. Sir Claude also went up to see it, and in the morning posted a notice about it, seeming to express confidence in its real importance, and saying that it was probably twenty-five to thirty miles distant. On the contrary part,

Mr. Brent, of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, added his testimony to that of Mr. Tweed, declaring that it was the light of a Chinese smelting furnace, and that he had seen it frequently last year.

The main attack of July 2 was directed at the Japanese position in the Fu. The gun at which our vain sortie made on Sunday had been aimed continued to batter down the walls. The Japanese had lost heavily and were driven further back. M. Pichon in his report asserts that Colonel Shiba told him that he did not know whether he could hold out another day. But then M. Pichon was always the first to hear bad news, sometimes the only one to believe it. Dr. Morrison, in writing of this time, simply recounts his admiration of the service done by Christian volunteers, drilled and armed by Colonel Shiba, to relieve his already reduced forces. He also dilates upon the fury with which the Chinese assailed the native Christians. 'They cursed them from over the wall, hurled stones at them, and threw shells to explode overhead. Only after the armistice, when we received the "Peking Gazette," did we find that word to burn out and slaughter the converts had come from the highest in the land.' The edict in question was translated and posted on the Bell Tower. It ran as follows :

Ever since foreign nations began the propagation of their religion, there have been many instances throughout

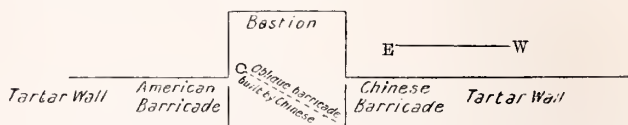
the country of ill-feeling between the people and the converts. All this is due to faulty administration on the part of local authorities, giving rise to feuds. The truth is that the converts also are children of the State, and among them are not wanting good and worthy people; but they have been led astray by false doctrines, and have relied on the missionaries for support, with the result that they have committed many misdeeds. They hold to their errors and will not turn from them, and irreconcilable enmity has thus grown up between the converts and the people. The Throne is now exhorting every member of the I Ho T'uan to render loyal and patriotic service, and to take his part against the enemies of his country, so that the whole population may be of one mind. Knowing that the converts are also subjects owing fealty to the Throne, we also know that they can bring themselves to form a class apart and invite their own destruction. If they can change their hearts, there is no reason why they should not be allowed to escape from the net. The Viceroy and Governors of the Provinces are all therefore to give orders to all local officials to issue the following notification: All those among the converts who repent of their former errors and give themselves up to the authorities shall be allowed to reform and their past shall be ignored. The public shall also be notified that in all places where converts reside they shall be allowed to report to the local authorities, and each case shall be settled according to general regulations, which will be drawn up later. As hostilities have now broken out between China and foreign nations, the missionaries of every country must be driven away at once to their own countries, so that they may not linger here and make trouble. But it is important that measures be taken to secure their protection on their journey. The high pro-

vincial authorities shall make close investigation into the circumstances of all places within their jurisdiction, and speedily take the necessary steps. Let there be no carelessness. (Above decree to be circulated for general information.) Issued July 2.

This edict, whilst professing a generous care for the safety of the missionaries, yet plainly asserted that the cause of the present troubles lay in the persistent ill-doing of the converts, guided by their foreign teachers. It exhorted the Boxers to drive away the missionaries, and to be diligent in their efforts to bring all the people to be of one mind. It thus gave Imperial sanction to one of the characteristic objects of the Boxer movement. Formerly anti-Christian riots had aimed rather at the destruction than the conversion of the Christians. It was a new thing for the persecutors of the Church to seek to force the converts to recant. This was now legalised in a peculiarly vicious form, which offered the hope of safety only to those converts who voluntarily gave themselves up. All others were doomed. The result, as far as we were concerned, was seen in the fury of the attack upon the Fu.

On the Tartar wall the enemy made a fresh approach to the American barricade. The Americans, in first taking up their position, had built their barricade across the wall on the east corner of one of the great bastions, thus leaving the bastion

outside. The Chinese now built an oblique wall across the bastion until it almost touched that held by the Americans, and erected there a fort from which they hoped to cover the American guard.



The position was really desperate. We were compelled either to drive them out or to abandon the wall. At daybreak the next morning (July 3), the Americans, supported by a large reinforcement of British and Russians, under the command of Captain Myers, leapt over our barricade and rushed the enemy's position. One of the Marines told me afterwards that they caught the enemy asleep, and found no one actually ready to defend the fort. They drove them back, killing about twenty and capturing a few rifles and ammunition, and then held the Chinese barricade against its former defenders. From a barricade further along the wall, however, the enemy opened fire, two American Marines were killed, and Corporal Gregory was shot through the foot. It was a splendid action, and caused great excitement and jubilation in the Legations. Not only was the American barricade on the wall saved, they now held a stronger position than ever. Moreover, the captured rifles and ammunition were of

priceless value, since the Japanese and Italians were already running short. Unhappily, the sortie cost us dear. In Corporal Gregory, the British force lost one of its ablest and most popular non-commissioned officers; but his removal was light compared with that of the American Captain Myers. In returning to take shelter behind the barricade after the great rush, he tripped over a spear and cut his leg. He made light of it, and refused to come into hospital. The wound was dressed in the American Legation, and, though painful, did not prevent him from maintaining his command. But, unfortunately, before it was well he developed typhoid fever, and this, in his weakened state, took such a hold that he was laid up till the end of the siege. This was a great loss. It was Captain Myers who had first seized the wall, who had recaptured it after its evacuation on July 1, who had been in command at that station since the beginning of the siege, and had led the last splendid rush in its defence. He could ill be spared. Thereafter officers had to be borrowed from other posts to undertake the work which he had been forced to relinquish.

We were growing hourly more sceptical concerning the speedy arrival of the relief force, of which the supposed searchlights had given promise. On the night of July 3 we sent out a messenger to seek for news, with a letter from Sir Claude MacDonald, urging

our friends to make all possible haste. The French Minister, who had been greatly excited by the prospect of relief, was again in despair. 'On se demande avec des angoisses croissantes,' he wrote in his diary, 'si des troupes viennent à notre secours, à quelle distance de Pékin elles seraient arrivées, et si les inondations dont nous menacerait la continuation de la pluie ne vont pas les arrêter.' But most people left 'les angoisses croissantes' to M. Pichon.

The British Legation was, long before this, in splendid order, and life in the community had assumed a settled form. The great anxiety lest the water supply should fail, which had at first caused the issue of strict orders against the use of baths, and sent the head of the water department every morning to make the round of the wells with string and stone to measure the supply, had been somewhat relaxed. The recent rains had filled the wells fuller than ever, and, though the general order was not rescinded, it was less carefully observed, and a few of the community, who were happy in the possession of quarters where a little privacy was possible, indulged in the luxury of an occasional tub. The great mass of the people had found permanent quarters, and were more or less settled down. The chapel was arranged in orderly compartments, and its occupants reduced to between forty and fifty men, women, and children. Many men began to find a little time now

and then for reading, and made full use of Mr. Cockburn's kind permission to use his library. Not a day passed without a good many people wandering into his study in search of a book. The library was not large, but it was extraordinarily catholic, ranging from law to the art of war, from the classics to yellow-backs. Every class of literature was represented—theology, biography, history, *belles-lettres*, science, art, novels, French and English. Every taste could find something to amuse and edify. The value of this library to the community cannot be over-estimated; it was almost as useful as the continual call to work in preserving people from *ennui* and depression. No one was idle for want of something to do, or melancholy for want of something to think about. This was probably not one of the weakest of the causes which tended to preserve us from disease, a preservation so remarkable under the circumstances that, when every possible cause has been allowed full weight, it can yet only be accounted for as the work of God's good Providence.

That night I kept watch as usual in the stable-yard. There was a magnificent display of lights, rockets, fire-balls, and rifle flashes, but no great harm was done.

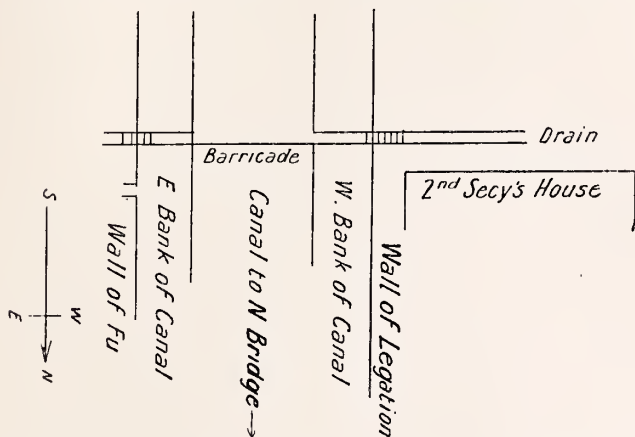
About this time the Chinese began to attempt a new plan of attack upon the British Legation. After the burning of the Hanlin no building remained standing between the British outposts and

the Imperial City wall. They now built behind that wall a strong gun-platform, and mounted upon it a foreign gun and some old cannon firing round shot. The parapet of the wall served as a breastwork, which they heightened and loopholed, whilst they put up an iron shutter before the larger gun. They could thus in perfect security bombard the Legation, which lay at their feet only about 300 yards distant, every chimney clearly visible through the trees, the line of many of the roofs not less visible, whilst a little further away could be seen the larger buildings of the other Legations.

• The besieged, on their side, could make no reply. To have attempted to take that platform without heavy guns with which to breach the wall would have been madness. It is quite incomprehensible why the Chinese did not mount more modern cannon on that point of vantage, and quietly and steadily reduce the Legation to a heap of ruins. It was not from want of arms or ammunition, of which there were plenty in the city. The solution of this problem lies in an obscurity of which I have little hope that the veil will ever be lifted. It is of the same kind as that which involves the enemy's use of mines. When the Chinese in their daily experience meet with matters beyond their ken, they put them on oneside, with the remark, 'Heaven ordains it.' At this point all that we can do is to imitate their example

and say, 'Heaven ordained it.' Shells from the battery burst over the Legation, round shot pierced the walls of the students' quarters and the Minister's house, and found their way into ladies' bedrooms; but when all is said little damage was done. The ladies were not even driven into the bomb-proof shelters.

From the same point the enemy could enfilade the canal and threaten our communications with the



Fu. But happily we had long ere this built a barricade across the bed of the canal, under shelter of which men could go to and fro in comparative safety. This covered way started in the British Legation just outside the Second Secretary's house, then occupied by the Russian Legation. Here an underground drain passed under the wall and the road into the canal below. The French engineer, in

whose charge this work was, opened up this drain, which was a large one built of hewn stones, and made steps by which it was possible to pass by the drain, under the wall and the road, into the bed of the canal. Then he built a strong brick barricade across the canal bed, which was almost dry at this season, and pierced the road on the opposite side of the canal, so that one could find one's way up an inclined plane into the Fu. It was at the building of this barricade across the canal that I saw Chinese coolies hesitate to obey orders for the first and last time during the siege. The tunnel under the canal was finished, and the first stones of the barricade were being laid. Snipers from the North Bridge were firing down the canal. The French engineer was a brave man, who had no sort of fear for himself, and went boldly out into the open. Yet the Chinese coolies would not follow him to lay stones. I could not comprehend it. I could only suppose that the hesitation was due to the engineer's ignorance of the Chinese language, which prevented him from explaining clearly what he wanted. However, the delay was but momentary; the barricade was finished, and afforded us a means of keeping up regular and speedy communication with the outposts in the Fu.

July 5 was saddened by the death of Mr. David Oliphant, shot through the liver whilst cutting down a tree in the Hanlin. He was a man who had

shown conspicuous ability in many directions. As a scholar of the Chinese language he had some reputation in the Legation, and about a year before, he had passed his final examination and been given a post in the Chancery. He was also a man of great bodily strength and a considerable capacity for military command. Ever since the siege began he had been in the front line of the defence. It was he who laboured at the fort round the front gate of the Legation; it was he who was conspicuous at the building of the barricade behind the gate in the stable-yard at the great fire. Further he had been on incessant duty in the Hanlin ever since its first occupation. He was also popular as a rider, a cricketer, and a football-player, who had been of material service in the occasional contests which Peking athletes arranged against the foreign community of Tientsin. He was deeply regretted by the whole Legation, and large numbers turned out to attend his funeral in the afternoon.

The same day Dr. Gilbert Reid was shot in the leg whilst passing over the South Bridge in the Legation Street. Dr. Reid had gained some notoriety both in America and England as the promoter of an International Institute for Peking. His design was to build a large institute which should combine the uses of a museum of Western inventions, a lecture-hall on foreign science, and a club where edu-

cated Chinese might meet and discuss affairs with foreigners. It was an able scheme, and even as late as last January he still had hopes of obtaining the necessary support from the Chinese Government. He had already received promises of help and large subscriptions from men of enlightenment both in China and the West. Amongst many other schemes for the benefit of the Chinese, his was ruined by the outbreak of the Boxer troubles, but, unlike most others, having as yet no tangible property to be destroyed by the rising, it is capable of reconstruction the moment peace is restored and the door once more open to useful influences. His was one of the cases in which temporary disablement was a real blessing to the man. He was not strong, and had suffered considerably from strain and the strangeness of siege diet. A few weeks of enforced rest in the hospital not only mended his leg but his constitution. It was a great pleasure to be able to assure his wife, as soon as his wound had been examined, that the shot was one of the most fortunate things that had happened to them since the troubles began, and with true American shrewdness she understood and acknowledged the truth of the saying.

It was strange at a time like that, when all the world supposed us to be thinking of nothing but the preservation of our lives, to see the hold which lust for loot exercised over some men's minds. Earlier in

the siege, when we were turning out the houses and shops between the British and Russian Legations, men had come in laden with hats trimmed with fur and such-like trifles to be stored in their narrow quarters. Later on they invaded the abandoned store, of M. Krüger, commonly called Keirulff's store because it was originally opened by a man of that name, and carried off all kinds of property of great or little intrinsic value. This peculiar joy in getting something for nothing seemed to affect a considerable part of the community, and led at last to scenes of great disorder. It was all the more curious at a moment when the theory of values was receiving such singular illustration, champagne being cheaper than soda-water, damask than sackcloth. People brought in musical boxes, and toys imported for the delectation of Chinese wealthy families. Quarrels took place in the stores over coveted possessions. A German was accused of having shot a Chinese who had appropriated some article which he desired. The story was contradicted, but a notice was posted at this time, that in consequence of the scandalous behaviour of certain people no one was to be allowed in the store without a written order from the general committee. It is a most unpleasant truth, but one to which all history bears witness, that imminent danger of death does not in any way lessen a man's desire to grasp at the possessions and

joys of this world, unless he has previously trained his mind to hold them lightly. The same truth found a striking illustration in the course of the afternoon. A civilian made his way to the Club, and, finding a considerable quantity of spirits abandoned there, drank himself into such a state of frenzy that he clambered over the French barricade at the east end of the Legation Street, and tried to rush the Chinese position alone. He was shot through the head and fell dead. Some attempt was made to recover his body by a party of Russian Marines, but the Chinese had raked it behind their barricade with long hooks and the attempt failed.

On July 6 about noon we heard heavy firing in the Fu, and soon afterwards three Japanese were brought into the hospital—an officer, Captain Ando, and two Marines. Captain Ando died on the operating table; the two Marines were put into the Japanese ward. It was interesting that of the four men then in the ward three could speak a few words of English, whilst one of the three knew enough to be of great use in interpreting for the others. The Japanese boasted that they had nearly captured a Chinese gun. The Chinese were using the gun to force a way in at the north-east corner of the Fu, and the Japanese made a brave effort to capture it. Unfortunately they had not enough men to effect their purpose and the attempt failed. Out of twenty-five Marines, the

Japanese had now lost seven killed and eleven wounded, of whom six had returned to their posts. Colonel Shiba had thus only thirteen Marines under his command, with a few volunteers. The total casualties amounted to ninety-three, of whom forty-four were then actually in the hospital in the British Legation. As patients the Japanese were as good as men could be: nothing could wring from them a groan or a word of complaint. One of those brought in on this day, Kuchiki, had his knee shattered to bits, but he bore it with the utmost fortitude. He crammed his blanket into his mouth and clenched his fists: the sweat poured down his face, but not a word would he utter of complaint. For the slightest attentions they were full of gratitude. It was always 'Good, very good, little pain.' These men won the respect of all the foreigners by their soldierly bearing, their steadiness, endurance, and patience.

For the last two days rumours of relief had failed, and men who guessed or who calculated were making long their dates, but on the morning of July 7 the community was again elated by the news that during the night the French and Austrians had heard great guns to the south, which were supposed to indicate that a battle was being fought not far off. But in the British Legation scepticism was increasing, and most people refused to get excited about that kind of report. Such rumours had been repeated

so often that we felt it vain to put much trust in them. Everyone was feeling the truth of the saying that 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' It was now a month since the foreigners first gathered within the lines of defence, and the whole of China might have been in a state of anarchy for aught we knew. It was easy enough to imagine causes for the delay, even though we refused to believe that the Powers would abandon their representatives to destruction.

In the afternoon people found fresh food for excitement and conversation. Mr. Squiers had suggested to Mitchell, the American gunner, the possibility of making a gun to fire some shells which the Russians had brought up with them, leaving the gun to follow behind. The gun had never come, and the shells had been sunk in a well in the Russian Legation to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands. There ensued a great scene at the armoury just inside the front gate. Mitchell and Thomas, the British armourer, were busy welding together pieces of brass piping and lashing them with copper wire ; but the question was where to find a breech-block when the body of the cannon should be finished. Many suggestions were made, more or less futile, but the riddle was never solved. They had not yet welded together more than two small pieces when some Chinese brought in an old

iron cannon which they had found in one of the shops on the Legation Street, and it was determined to use that. At first it was argued that it was of British make and had been left behind in 1860, and later it was reported that the date 1860 was actually on the gun. So stories grow! The gun was, in fact, one of the common Chinese iron cannon such as were to be seen in abundance in the city or on the Tartar wall, but it was good enough to serve our turn. The first thing was to clear the bore, then to remove a large part of the charge from the Russian shell, then to mount the gun on a carriage, finally to find a man brave enough to fire it off. Happily there were plenty such, but the honour was given to Mitchell as the inventor. The gun was mounted on 'ricksha wheels, and was fired with care. The result was magnificent; there was a deafening din, the gun turned head over heels, the 'ricksha wheels went to pieces, and the whole was mixed up in glorious confusion; but it had not burst, and henceforth it was a piece of value and was mounted on a spare carriage belonging to the Italian one-pounder. For several days its name was a question of dispute, but by degrees 'The International' or 'Betsy,' gained in men's favour, and towards the end of the siege 'Betsy' became the accepted title, at least amongst the British Marines. It was said to have done wonders, but it probably

frightened the enemy with its bark more than it hurt them with its bite. Still, it was considered of so much use that it was taken to any place where the Chinese barricades were peculiarly dangerous.

At the same time the gunners conceived the idea of refilling the shells of the Italian gun and charging them with a solid leaden shot. Great quantities of leaden candlesticks and incense pots were brought in by the coolies and piled up inside the gate. The forge was brought out, and all day the men were busy casting shot and filling the empty cartridges. Thus in one day we secured the use of two guns: we provided a gun for the Russian shells and shells for the Italian gun. We felt that a great addition had been made to the strength of the defence.

All day the Chinese guns on the Imperial City wall continued to fire upon us from time to time, and a few round shot made their way into some of the houses. One passed through the dining-room of the British Minister's house and struck the top corner of the frame of a great picture of Her Majesty the Queen. It was singular that exactly the same thing had happened at Ladysmith. We had a picture in the Legation torn out of some illustrated paper, and one of the students took a photograph of the Minister's dining-room and mounted it beside the printed illustration. The

coincidence was exact. The right-hand corner of the frame of each picture was damaged, the pictures themselves were untouched. Beneath the illustration was printed a remark that the defenders of Ladysmith held this event as a good omen of their eventual success; we hoped that the same omen might prove equally true in our case. During the night there was more or less disturbance, and a shot struck the corner of the chapel roof.

It was often remarked during the siege that the enemy seemed to prefer Sunday to any other day in the week for making attacks. This was probably not the result of accident. The foreign division of the year into weeks is so convenient that the term coined by missionaries has become widely spread, and the Sunday is well known even to the heathen. It is not improbable that the enemy did deliberately select the Christian sacred day for assault. July 8 was no exception to the rule. Fierce attacks were made on the British and French Legations, and above all on the Fu. To the west of the British Legation, behind Mr. Cockburn's house, where on June 22 they had set fire to the buildings, they planted a gun, and proceeded to shell the house and the fort upon the roof. For a short time the excitement was very great, and it seemed likely that they would do considerable damage. But, as at the stable-yard so here, after firing a few shells which

burst on the roof and punctured a number of small holes through which we afterwards could view the state of the weather whilst enjoying our meals, they ceased firing, whether out of respect for the marksmanship of the Marines on watch, or for some other reason known only to themselves, it was impossible to tell. It was proposed at one time to haul one of the guns up on to the roof. An inclined plane was built up, on which the gun might be dragged, and more sandbags were added to the fort on the roof. But it was not found necessary to execute this plan. The fire from the enemy's barricade ceased, and Betsy was more urgently needed in the Fu. The actual results were less dangerous than inconvenient. The house was still habitable and, indeed, not seriously injured, but the least storm of rain brought on a little flood in the bedrooms on the west side of the house, which frequently caused us considerable annoyance. For that night the ladies who occupied the west room were moved into the front of the house; but the next day, a round shot having crashed into Mr. Cockburn's bedroom in the front, and demonstrated that no one place was much safer than any other, and the cannonade from the back of the house having ceased, the ladies again returned to their old quarters and things went on as before, except for the occasional deluge.

In the Fu the enemy renewed the attack with

fire and shell, and yet more of the buildings in the north-east corner were destroyed. A host of Christian refugees moved over to the buildings between the British and Russian Legations, and the Japanese line was weakened. Reinforcements were sent out, supported by Betsy, and the attack was repulsed without serious loss.

In the French Legation the allies were hard pressed, and the Austrian Captain Thomann was killed. The Legation was being steadily reduced to ruins. But the defenders maintained their posts, as did also the Germans in their Legation and the Americans at their barricade on the Tartar wall.

About this time the community started a laundry, which added immensely to the general comfort. The management of this business was put into the hands of Mr. Brazier, a Commissioner of Customs, who held his court in the outhouses by the North Stables, and it was truly amusing to see this gentleman sitting there to receive the bundles brought to him by the various people. In the cool of the day the residents might be seen wandering up to the washhouse, each with his little bundle of clothes, which Mr. Brazier duly checked and handed over to the washermen. The washing was a little rough, since no clothes could be starched or ironed, but they were made clean, and the general success of the works was so great that the officers who marched in

on the day of the relief declared that we all looked as if we were met for a garden party.

The lines of defence in the Fu now stretched across the garden from the south-east to the north-west. The Japanese held the extreme east, some Italians and Austrians the west end of the entrenchments. About this time, Dr. Morrison says on July 9, occurred one of the most painful incidents of the siege. The position occupied by the Europeans was a difficult and dangerous one, and under the shock of a heavy attack they were seized with panic and hastily retired. The consequence was that the whole line of defence was endangered. If the Chinese had seized their opportunity to rush the abandoned barricade, they would have been able to take the whole west wall of the Fu, which covered the British Legation, and to outflank the Japanese. Luckily they hesitated, and Don Livio Caëtani, who was in command, seized the opportunity to rally his forces and reoccupy the outpost before any great harm was done. It was said that we owed this good fortune to the stratagem by which the Japanese had before snared the enemy to their destruction; but to whatever cause the hesitation of the Chinese was due, it was not to be counted on, and from that time onwards the position was occupied by British Marines supported by Italians.

In the course of the day great excitement was

caused by the return of a messenger sent out in the morning by Mr. Squiers. He said that he had gone out by the Tung Pien Mên, and returned by the Ch'í Hua Mên. He had bought a couple of chickens and a few peaches, and reported that the Chinese city was free from soldiers, and that the Ha Ta Mên had been closed for some days past. He said that the Chinese seemed much afraid of the foreign soldiers; but that business was being carried on as usual inside the Ch'í Hua Mên, that the Empress and Emperor were still in the city, and that the 'Peking Gazette' was published daily as usual. He also said that the North Cathedral still held out. But he had heard no news of the approach of the relief force. This rather depressed people's spirits, and the general feeling was one of reaction after the hopes raised by the confident reports of the Austrian and French soldiers concerning the battle which they had heard waged outside the city on the preceding Saturday. But people clung to their hopes, and eagerly expected fresh news. After dinner Mr. Cockburn, his wife, and Dr. Morrison were sitting on the verandah when they saw rockets to the south-east. Dr. Morrison had just been reminding us that we should probably only meet with one siege in a lifetime, and that it was just as well to have a good one whilst we were about it, and expressing the consequent hope that we should be reduced to our last tin of biscuit

before the relief marched in. He leapt up full of excitement and rushed off to inquire about it. It turned out to be only a firework let off by the Japanese on general principles ; perhaps, too, as a signal based on a real belief in their own persistent prophecies of the nearness of the troops.

At this time the American missionaries used to enliven the evenings by singing hymns and songs outside the chapel door. It was curious and entertaining to sit out in the dim twilight and listen to the strains of 'Hail, Columbia,' and 'Marching through Georgia,' or 'De Ringtailed Coon,' or 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' to an accompaniment of rifle shots. I often used to wonder what the Chinese thought of it, and why it did not serve to stir in them a burning desire to put an end to that concert. But it continued happily and joyously until the day when it ended with the 'Doxology' without any Chinese rifle accompaniment.

On Monday and Tuesday (July 9 and 10) we received no new patients into the Legation: the hospital roll stood at ninety-nine. The days were fairly quiet, broken only by sharp fusillades of a few minutes' duration, as if to assure us that the enemy were not asleep. But on July 11 things again got more exciting. It was a day of rumours, a day, too, marked by sad losses. The rumours were curious, their sources obscure, and their truth doubtful, but

that did not alter the fact that they excited and interested the community and tended to enliven the dulness of a sad day. We heard first that Prince Ch'ing was at open war with Prince Tuan, and that this was the explanation both of the firing which had been heard in the south and of the comparative peace which had reigned in the British Legation during the last forty-eight hours. Then it was reported that a Japanese, who had been sent out four days ago disguised as a Buddhist priest, had returned with the news that 13,000 foreign troops had left Tientsin four days ago. Then it was said that we had just sent out a spy through the sluice-gate, but that the Chinese had fired at him and he had hastily retreated. Then eighteen prisoners were taken by the French, one of whom asserted that the enemy were mining that Legation. It was impossible even to attempt to sift truth from falsehood in this mass of strange reports. The only part of it which was justified by the event was the evidence of the prisoner that the Chinese were mining the French Legation. That proved only too true a day or two later.

In the afternoon there was heavy firing in the Fu, where the Chinese continued to press their advantage. Five new patients were brought into the hospital, amongst them Mr. Nigel Oliphant, whose brother had been killed on the 5th. There was

no man in the Legation whose case deserved more sincere pity, or who had served under such trying circumstances with greater courage ; but his wound was not serious. It was otherwise with that excellent scholar and gentleman, Mr. Narahara, of the Japanese Legation. He had received a grievous wound in the leg, tetanus set in, and he died on the 24th, to our great regret. It was sad then to walk through the hospital and see so many brave and good men struck down in the prime of life, racked with pains, mutilated and marred. It is doubly sad now to recall those scenes and those pains. It forced home, with the most acute insistence, the great question why one was hit thus and here, another there, this one killed instantly, that after an hour's anguish, a third not killed but lamed, a fourth only scratched. It brought home again the misery of those who feel bound to believe that these things happen by chance, robbing them of all meaning or hope ; and the blessedness of those who can believe that not one of these things is meaningless, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowledge, not a hair of a man's head is singed without His command, that all their woes have their place in His great plan of the redemption of mankind, that they all contribute to the fulfilment of a purpose of love for the world. To such the hospital was a school where they might learn as

they had never learned before the meaning of vicarious suffering.

At this time some of the British Marines who had been serving at the barricade on the Tartar wall were sent into hospital suffering from fever. The heat, the exposure, the stench of rotting carcasses which could not be removed though they lay close outside the barricade, broke down men's constitutions. It was fortunate that fever did not decimate the ranks of the defenders of the Legations; as it was, the fever cases were never very numerous. At this time there were only three or four; the total number of names on the hospital roll was 108.

The French seemed to be rather good at taking prisoners. On July 12 they captured another man, who gave them all sorts of strange information; but it was difficult to find out exactly what he had said, and what rumour had added to his tale, and at the time I made little effort to sift the stories, thinking that the chief interest of them lay in the effect which they produced on the spirits of the community. It really was not of much importance whether the man had actually said what people thought or pretended that he said: the story got about and amused or interested or excited people, and that was all that I cared to note. I did not even record all that was reported, only such parts as seemed curious or as possible explanations of the

strange attack made upon us, at once ferocious and persevering, and timid and hesitating. It was reported then that this man had said that the foreign settlement at Tientsin had been destroyed on June 17, that Prince Ch'ing's soldiers were actually fighting with Prince Tuan's forces in the streets of Peking over the division of loot, that Prince Ch'ing himself took no active part in any business of State, refusing to have anything to do with the present state of affairs. This we thought might account for the strange story told the other day that Prince Ch'ing was actually at war with the Tuan faction. Further, he was said to have informed the French that the Empress was still in Peking, and favoured the attack on the Legations, but that an edict had been issued in which the Empress explained that the firing of large guns was a dangerous practice and liable to do much mischief; she therefore ordered the troops to confine themselves to the use of rifles and small arms. We were all delighted with this story, not because we expected the bombardment to cease, but because the remark seemed so natural under the circumstances, as if the Chinese in the city had been complaining of the bursting of shells in their houses. The firing of the Chinese guns was often so erratic that it must have done considerable damage in many quarters. But it was a deliciously Chinese method of proceeding to forbid the use of

the weapons instead of punishing the misuse of them and providing for their more effectual employment in the future.

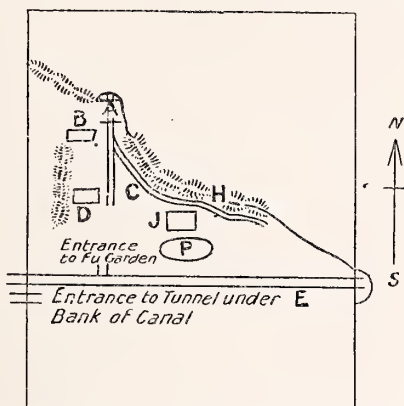
The day was further marked by the capture of two Chinese flags. One in the French Legation was taken by M. Pelliot, one in the British by Sergeant Preston. These were considered great achievements and of excellent good omen. They serve to illustrate the closeness with which the Chinese invested us.

In the hospital occurred one of those curious performances which exhibit that strange absence of nerves often displayed by Chinese and Japanese, which led Dr. Arthur Smith to write a special chapter upon it in his 'Chinese Characteristics.' When I went into the ward in the afternoon, I found that Kuchiki, the Japanese with the shattered knee, had moved his pillows to the other end of his bed, and had swung himself round, so that his feet were in the place where his head had been. I asked the reason, and was told that the sun shone on his head, and he found it hot. I asked who had moved him, and he explained that no one had moved him, he had moved himself. I pointed out with some vigour that he had run great risk in screwing himself about whilst his knee was in that critical condition, and generally tried to impress upon him that he had played the fool. Alas ! I only succeeded in making him understand that I was annoyed at his moving, and when

I returned in ten minutes' time he had changed round again, and received me with a smile of conscious virtue. It was vain to upbraid, one could only laugh. But what European afflicted with even a simple fracture would have attempted such a thing?

In the Fu the gun fired at a range of about fifty yards could scarcely miss its mark, and the difficulty of holding the barricades at the north-west corner was increasing. It was repeatedly necessary to build up by night the defences which the gun had reduced to ruins by day. On the night of July 11 Mr. Norris was sent to this task, and he was there again during a great part of July 12. About 9 P.M. I was sent over to relieve him. I had never before been into the Fu, and the night was dark, so that I had to get a Chinese to guide me through the garden. We picked our way past a house in which the Italian guard had its kitchen and rest-house, along a little trench about a foot deep under the shelter of a low range of artificial hills to the next house, where was the station of the British guard. Behind this there was a tunnel piercing the hill, on the top of which was a small wooden building. Underneath it was the British barricade, A, with the house close by on the south-west, B. The Italians held the hills to the right, C, and the house, D. The Japanese were still further to the right, guarding a large gate, H, then strongly barricaded, together with the hills on

either side, and the barricade to the east gate of the Fu, and had their head-quarters in a large house, J, overlooking an ornamental pool, P. The business in hand for us was to keep the way under the little tunnel and the bank on the right-hand side. To do this Mr. Norris and his men were laying sandbags on the top of the bank round A, and building a strong



LINES OF DEFENCE IN PRINCE SU'S FU, JULY 12

fort just on the other (north) side of the tunnel. I found a toil-worn, dispirited group of men. For the moment the enemy's firing had ceased, and we could hear ourselves speak as we stood under the shelter of the house. The barricade stood, and, though it was manifestly not strong enough to support shell fire, still it would suffice for the moment. The coolies were all worn out, hungry, and tired.

Mr. Norris had no clear orders what to do next. Captain Percy Smith was looking forward gloomily to a long eleven hours' night watch after a hard day. They insisted that no more could be done that night. It was beginning to rain, and work was really almost impossible, so I returned with Mr. Norris to find that I had been sent out by mistake, and had better keep my usual watch in the stable-yard.

I had scarcely got back when the Chinese began a fierce fusillade, and the Italian guard in the Fu retired, leaving the British in the corner, isolated. There was great indignation over this mistake, which might have resulted in the British being surrounded, the line of hills captured, and the Japanese cut off from the British Legation. Happily, the Chinese again failed to take advantage of their opportunity, and the situation was saved. At the same time the British lost their outer barricade and had to fall back on the inner one just at the south end of the tunnel.

Next day (July 13) the attack was renewed with unusual vigour. The enemy's design seems to have been to try to cut our communications by forcing a way into the Fu, and then to follow up the advantage by a simultaneous attack upon the French and German Legations, by which they might hope to win the whole of our east position, and confine us to the Legations west of the canal. About 4.30

Mr. Norris was working in the Fu when the attack began. He was struck in the neck with a piece of shell and stunned, but the wound was not really serious, and he was able to walk into the hospital to be dressed. He was then sent to bed, where he quickly fell into a sound sleep, and in a day or two was well enough to go about once more.

About six o'clock we suddenly heard two great explosions in the French Legation, and almost immediately afterwards two French Marines were brought in, slightly wounded by falling bricks, who told us that the Chinese had fired mines under a house in the French Legation, and blown it up. Presently a large fire was seen in that quarter. The French were driven out of the main buildings—Herr von Rosthorn having a narrow escape of sharing the fate of two Marines who were buried in the falling houses—and fell back upon entrenchments which they had prepared, leading from the chapel to the north wall of the Legation. At the same time the Chinese made a desperate attempt to break into the German Legation, and actually did force their way into the club, and set it on fire, but were driven back at the point of the bayonet. A large part of the buildings in the east were now in a blaze, and there was great danger lest the enemy should break through the defence. In the British Legation the alarm bell was rung: everybody was at his post, and the gates

were shut. The attack went on furiously until 8 P.M., and then gradually died away. The French and Germans still held the remnants of their Legations.

All that night the French Legation was burning. All night in the Fu the coolies were strengthening the barricade in the north-west corner, which had been seriously damaged. We raised a sandbag barricade all along the top of the tunnel and round the edge of the cutting, and did what we could at banking up the barricade with bricks and earth. The enemy fired an occasional shot, and when we listened carefully we could distinctly hear them working at their barricade only a few yards distant, but they made no serious attempt to assault us. The coolies all worked splendidly from 9 P.M. till 4 A.M., and then they were worn out. They fell asleep the moment they ceased work. They dropped like stones, and became at once insensible even to blows. Exhortations, threats, entreaties, warnings were in vain. It was plain that they could not stand upon their feet any longer.

In the morning we awoke to find a new excitement in the Legation. A messenger whom we had sent out on the 10th with a letter to the expected relief force returned. He asserted that he had been captured by Boxers, taken to the temple of the Wo Fo Ssü Sleeping Buddha in the Chinese City and beaten, then led to Jung Lu's head-quarters in the Imperial

City. He now brought a letter addressed to Sir Claude MacDonald purporting to be written by 'Prince Ch'ing and others,' with a verbal message that men would wait at the water-gate for an answer. The letter was posted on the Bell Tower and read thus :—

For the last ten days the soldiers and militia have been fighting, and there has been no communication between us, to our great anxiety. Some time ago we hung up a board expressing our intentions, but no answer has been received, and, contrary to expectation, the foreign soldiers made renewed attacks, causing alarm and suspicion amongst soldiers and people. Yesterday the soldiers captured a convert named Chin Ssü Hsi and learnt from him that all the foreign Ministers were all well, which caused us very great satisfaction. But it is the unexpected which happens. The reinforcements of foreign troops were long ago stopped and turned back by the Boxers, and if in accordance with previous agreement we were to guard your Excellencies out of the city, there are so many Boxers on the Tientsin-Taku road that we should be very apprehensive of misadventure.

We now request your Excellencies to first take your families and the various members of your staffs and leave your Legations in detachments. We should select trustworthy officers to give close and strict protection, and you should temporarily reside in the Tsungli Yamên, pending future arrangements for your return home, in order to preserve friendly relations intact from beginning to end.

But at the time of leaving the Legations there must

on no account whatever be taken any single armed foreign soldier, in order to prevent doubt and fear on the part of the troops and people, leading to untoward incidents.

If your Excellency is willing to show this confidence, we beg you to communicate with all the foreign Ministers in Peking, to-morrow at noon being the limit of time, and to let the original messenger deliver your reply, in order that we may settle in advance the day for leaving the Legations.

This is the single way of preserving relations that we have been able to devise in the face of innumerable difficulties. If no reply is received by the time fixed, even now our affection will not enable us to help you. Compliments.

Prince Ch'ing and others.

This curious epistle was received with astonishment, ridicule, and contempt by the community. But it roused many interesting questions. Who were its real authors, Prince Ch'ing himself and a friendly party in the Cabinet, or the Boxer chiefs? Could even a Chinese really suppose that it was possible that the Ministers would go out in detachments, unarmed, after the murder of Baron von Ketteler and the desperate attack which the night before had threatened to destroy the whole quarter to the east of the canal? Could they imagine us capable of abandoning our Chinese defenders to massacre? The assertions of the writer that the attack upon the Legations was due to the aggressive

action of the foreign soldiers, that the Government was and always had been full of solicitude and anxiety for the safety of the Ministers, that they still hoped 'to preserve friendly relations intact from beginning to end,' stirred much indignation and ridicule, but in fact there was nothing strange in these. They were simply the usual language of the Chinese 'peace-talker' when he wants to save the face of both parties to a fight, and assures the world and the belligerents that the whole thing was an unavoidable accident, and that the two gentlemen in question are both good men and excellent friends parted by a little misunderstanding. Such words are not meant to be taken seriously. The questions of authorship and intention were serious and important. Mr. T'ang, the head writer of the British Legation, inclined to the view that the epistle was the genuine work of Prince Ch'ing, and that reading was the one adopted by the Ministers. Sir Claude MacDonald, in his recently published despatches, explains the attitude of the Ministers thus :

It was throughout assumed that there must be different degrees of hostility towards us amongst the officials influential with the Court, and that even amongst the most hostile there must be some more capable than others of realising the disastrous consequences of the Government's policy. Our object, therefore, was to strengthen the hands of those who from whatever motive were opposed to extreme measures, and thus to improve

our chance of holding out by diminishing the vigour of the attack. To have refused to enter into any correspondence or to have confined ourselves to denunciation of the outrages committed by the Chinese Government would have had the contrary effect of strengthening the extreme party, by giving the impression that nothing they might do would increase the penalty already incurred, and that their only chance of escaping it lay in destroying the European witness of their crime.

I am bound, however, to admit that, so far as I can judge, there was never any possibility after the siege had begun of our accepting the Chinese suggestion. To English memories the massacre of Cawnpore presented a sufficient similarity to our own case to act as a warning of the consequences of surrender to treacherous Orientals ; but the recollection was hardly needed to convince us that our only chance of safety lay in holding out where we were. We could not have abandoned to massacre the native Christians we had been protecting, yet with them we should have formed a convoy of over 3,000 people, nearly 2,000 being women and children. Even leaving the native Christians out of the calculation, a train of over 200 white women and children and 40 or 50 wounded men could not have been guarded on the march by the force that sufficed to hold the Legation defences.

On Sunday, July 15, a reply was sent explaining that the action of our troops was purely defensive, and declining to go to the Tsungli Yamên, at the same time assuring the Government that we should be glad to hear from them through a responsible officer. The day was comparatively quiet, but

in the Fu there was continued firing. There Mr. H. Warren, one of the students, was mortally wounded whilst on watch. He died an hour or two later. Happily, he was unconscious, and so did not suffer any pain. He was a splendid fellow, quiet, gentlemanly, and brave, and a regular communicant.

The enemy were at this time making a strong attack upon the north-west corner of the Fu, in the hope of cutting the line of communication between the east and west sides of the canal. Their gun had battered down the barricade, and at 10 P.M. their fire drove back the coolies who were then trying to restore it, but they were soon able to return, and after that first fusillade we were only annoyed by occasional shots.

About 7 A.M. on July 16 Captain Strouts, Dr. Morrison, and Colonel Shiba were making a round of inspection. There was one place in the Fu which it was always dangerous to cross. After passing the Italian guard-house the way lay under the shelter of a low range of artificial hills, as I have already explained. The enemy built high barricades on the other side of the hills and kept up a continual fire across this little piece of open ground. Many men were wounded there; three ponies were shot there on one night; the opposite wall of the Fu was covered with bullet-marks. It was a standing order to double across this open space. Here Captain Strouts

and his fellows were caught in a storm of bullets. Strouts was hit in the thigh; the large artery was cut, and he died of shock in the hospital very soon after. Dr. Morrison, in turning to help him, was wounded in the leg; Colonel Shiba received a bullet through his coat. It was a terrible loss. The services of Captain Strouts and of Dr. Morrison have been mentioned again and again by every writer on the siege. The loss to the defence was great, and the whole community went mourning. Captain Strouts was buried with Mr. Warren in the afternoon.

The scene in the little cemetery behind the First Secretary's house was a very striking one. The whole world turned out to follow these two to the grave—Ministers, officers, Marines, missionaries, ladies, children, all who were not on duty were there. At the moment there was a furious attack going on, and bullets were whistling through the trees. At the same moment the Chinese were sending in their second messenger; and Mr. Conger, the American Minister, received at the grave-side the first message from the outside world which we had seen since the siege began. These letters were brought by the same messenger who had delivered the first epistle on the 14th. The letter to Sir Claude again purported to come from 'Prince Ch'ing and others,' and explained that the reason why the Ministers had

been urged to go to the Yamên was that they might be more easily protected there; but it did not press the point. The writers said that they were surprised that after their last letter the foreigners had continued to fire on the Chinese troops, and that they would do their utmost to protect the Legations, and begged that the foreign Ministers would restrain their troops from attacking the Chinese. It was an amusing comment on this pacific note that Mr. Cockburn, who went out to meet the messenger waving his handkerchief, was fired at, and at the moment it arrived shells from the gun on the Imperial City wall were bursting over the Legation.

The message enclosed to Mr. Conger was also curious. It was written in a cypher which he declared was known only to the office in Washington, and simply said: 'Communicate tidings bearer.' It was undated, and the general opinion seemed to be that it was an old telegram which the authors of the epistle to Sir Claude had sent on in ignorance of its meaning. The bearer of the message was also reported to have said that he had heard one official remark to another that the foreign troops were at Lang Fang; but he did not venture to assert positively that he had heard clearly what was said. Consequently people did not place any great confidence in his report.

To the letter from Prince Ch'ing answer was returned that the Legation guard were simply acting

on the defensive, and that the firing on our side would stop the moment that the Chinese ceased to attack us and to build barricades and other offensive works against us. Mr. Conger contented himself with asking when the telegram just sent to him had been received in Peking, and whether any further explanation had been sent with it.

CHAPTER VII

THE ARMISTICE. JULY 17 TO AUGUST 10

IT added greatly to the regret with which many men viewed the death of Captain Strouts that he fell on the eve of the armistice, and that the first assurances of quieter days reached us at his graveside. Often in the course of the next fortnight did men remark that it seemed almost unfair that he should have seen all the fiercest part of the strife and then have fallen on the very day when the Chinese at length showed signs of yielding. But at the moment we were in no hurry to place implicit confidence in the promises of Prince Ch'ing. We had received pacific letters from the Chinese before, and they had been only the precursors of more violent attacks. But on this occasion incredulity was forced to give way.

For the next twenty-four hours the community lived in a state of amazed suspense. Every hour saw a new marvel. Dr. Smith, the great authority

on the Chinese character, had long before confessed that he had lost his way. The night passed quietly. In the morning two Chinese presented themselves at the German Legation. One was a trumpeter in the Chinese army who had been taught the bugle by Sir Robert Hart's bandmaster. He was wounded in the head, and said that he had been struck by his officer for refusing to blow his bugle; the other was a messenger sent by a certain General Sun. They were brought into the British Legation in a cart. Both alike said that they had come to inquire what we meant to do, and to ask if a foreign Chinese Secretary would go to the Ha Ta Mên to discuss the situation with the General. They explained that orders had come from Jung Lu to cease firing on the Legations; and the bugler added that General Nieh had been defeated between Taku and Tientsin and had committed suicide, and that Jung Lu's men attacking us, originally 500 in number, had been reduced to 200 by desertions because the men were tired of fighting and ran away. Answer was returned that we did not propose to fire without cause, but that we could not allow the Chinese to continue to build barricades, as they had been doing ever since the first message from Prince Ch'ing reached us.

Meanwhile, all the morning, Chinese soldiers had been coming up to the barricades unarmed, and, holding up their hands, entreated to be allowed to come

in. They were generally sent back, but at the French barricade M. Chamot received several, gave them tea, and questioned them concerning the movements of the foreign troops, but they professed to know nothing. Then a French volunteer named Pellicot went out and got over the barricade, saying that he was going to have tea with the Chinese. He was taken away. About 4 P.M. a letter written in Chinese but signed by him in Roman characters was brought in, which said that he had been taken to the Tsungli Yamên. There was great anxiety felt for him in the Legation, and most people were of opinion that he deserved great blame for playing such a foolhardy game, but at six he turned up safe and sound, and boasted that he had been taken to Jung Lu's head-quarters and well fed and questioned as to our state, and that he had replied that we were enjoying a splendid time, lacking nothing but fresh fruit, whereupon the Chinese gave him some melons and peaches and sent him back.

All day the Chinese continued to come to our barricades and were sent away. Some men argued that it was a ruse intended to give them an opportunity of spying out the land, and that we had made a great mistake in admitting even the two emissaries of General Sun within the lines; others argued that it was a genuine truce, and indicated that the relief force was near at hand. But whatever the cause, the effect

was sufficiently curious and amusing. We had been besieged by these men for a month ; there was yet another month to come during which we should be subject to their attacks, yet for the moment they were displaying every sign of friendship, and we could only keep them out by posting large sign-boards at every corner warning them against approaching too near to our outposts. They were to be seen on the roofs of all the houses near us exposing themselves without fear, calling out to us and professing friendship. It was even said that the Japanese bought rifles and ammunition from the Chinese soldiers for 15 dollars apiece. That would have been an incredible story anywhere else but in China ; in China it was not only credible but probable. Where soldiers desert as they please, and return to the flag as they please, why should they not sell their weapons before deserting ? It would be sheer folly to refuse the advantage of a little ready money from a scrupulous clinging to a sentimental patriotism which no Chinese could possibly understand. Even when, as in the present case, the war was a popular one, there are always thousands of Chinese who cling to the old inborn idea, that war with all other matters of State is the business of the mandarin, in which the people ought not to meddle further than they are paid or forced to do ; in any case, there can be no objec-

tion to turning an honest penny if opportunity occurs.

Later in the day Mr. Conger received another message from the Tsungli Yamên enclosed in a letter to Sir Claude. This message contained a telegram from Wu T'ing Fang (Chinese Ambassador at Washington) addressed to his Government, to the effect that the American Government was desirous of preserving friendly relations with China, but was anxious about the health of the Minister, and requesting immediate information. From this we concluded that the three code words which were sent to Mr. Conger the day before were added by the American Government to Wu T'ing Fang's despatch with a view to obtaining direct information concerning the real state of affairs in Peking, in order to ascertain whether Wu's assurances of the safety of all the Legations was strictly true. It was added that the message had reached Peking on the 11th. To this Mr. Conger replied in cypher that we had been besieged for over a month with shot and shell, and that unless strong measures were taken at once, we were all in danger of being massacred. He sent this back by the Chinese messenger, with the request that it might be forwarded at once.

The American Minister was always very ready to communicate news and told his people everything that went on. In this his policy was

different from that of the British authorities, who often suppressed news of public interest, and posted notices of letters received and answers sent two or three days after the event, when the general tenour of them was already widely known by rumour in a more or less uncertain and garbled form, and even then the notices were often fragmentary. This caused a good deal of discontent and kept people's minds in suspense. There was no doubt some cause for the suspicion that news might leak out to the Chinese investing us of the state of affairs or even of plans which had better be kept secret; but that was no reason for delaying the publication of those items which the Ministers intended to publish at all; for the idea that news of importance was kept from them irritated men's minds and tended to a general condition of agitation and suspense.

The letter to Sir Claude stated that the attack upon us was due to the hasty and ill-considered action of our Marines, who had gone out into the streets, excited the people, fired upon the Imperial troops, raided temples, and created disturbance in the city. The Chinese now requested that the foreign troops should cease from hostilities and abandon the Tartar wall, the holding of which was highly inconvenient. To this Sir Claude replied by a review of the events of the past month,

explaining that the attack upon us was made by Government troops, who even during the armistice proposed on June 25 had taken advantage of the cessation of hostilities to advance their works and strengthen their means of assault. He added that it was impossible for us to permit the Chinese to continue to work at their barricades in peace, and still less possible for us to retire from the wall, which was one of our great safeguards, more especially as the Chinese had repeatedly used the wall as a vantage ground from which to attack us. He also requested that permission should be granted to vendors of fruit and ice to supply us with these luxuries, which were even necessities in the summer weather. Many of the hotter heads in the Legation looked upon this last request as a sign of mean-spirited weakness. They wanted to refuse to have any dealings with the Chinese, and later on, when the Yamên once or twice sent us small supplies of fruit, they would have sent them back with insults and threats. But, apart from the great boon which these things proved to men, women, and children, who had been cooped up in a narrow space for the hottest months of the year, such a reply might have tended to hasten calamity, and no one can doubt the wisdom of the more moderate counsels which prevailed with the responsible Ministers.

Late in the evening I had an interesting conversation with T'ang about the situation. I asked him whence he supposed all these messages to emanate, to which he answered that he was persuaded that they came from Prince Ch'ing and Jung Lu. His opinion was that the Empress had been won over to violent action by the assurances of Prince Tuan, that by the aid of his gods he could exterminate the foreigners in a few days, that already a month had elapsed without any signs of success, and that consequently the Empress and Jung Lu had begun to see that he could not fulfil his promises, and were listening to the counsels of Prince Ch'ing, and anxious to avoid the consequences of their folly by an early surrender. 'But,' I asked, 'how could it come to pass that the Empress, who had had forty years' experience of foreigners, and Jung Lu, who was not an ignorant man, ever brought themselves to believe in Prince Tuan and his gods?' At that T'ang laughed and said, 'That is just where you foreigners can never understand the Chinese. In the ground of their hearts they all believe in these gods. Even if they have been Christians for generations they still believe in them.' That reopened in my mind the old question of the impossibility of the foreigner ever being in real sympathy with a people like the Chinese. He never can keep always in mind the

thought that what is incredible to him is perfectly obvious to them. He never can grasp the incredible belief which at any given moment is the real basis of their action. In the face of that incomprehensible background of thought in the Chinese mind I felt doubly disgusted when I heard people talk of the Boxers and the Chinese in one sweeping denunciation as devils and monsters of iniquity. They seemed to me to have done nothing morally worse than the French did at the Revolution, nothing morally worse than we ourselves did when we burnt witches alive; yet no one would feel justified in condemning the whole French race as a race of devils or the whole English race as a race of monsters because in their ignorance they thought such iniquities to be just and lawful. From their own point of view, if only one could grasp it, the Chinese had doubtless plenty of justification. It is great injustice to judge a race by standards of morality of which they are totally ignorant, from a level of education to which they are utter strangers. Yet at that time if a man ventured to suggest such a thought there were people in the Legation who would refuse to speak to him.

The morning of July 18 was again quiet, and we began to think that the Chinese really meant to keep the truce, which indeed they did, more or less, until the eve of the relief. Their soldiers showed

themselves freely at the barricades, and the Chinese secretaries were busy all the morning preparing fresh notices warning them to keep behind their own lines. The freedom with which the Chinese exposed themselves and offered to approach us was a very singular testimony to the confidence which this people has in the good faith of the foreigners. It has often been remarked that Chinese coolies trade upon this exact sense of right and justice, by which they know the foreigner to be bound, and induce him to pay exorbitant prices by insisting either that he promised or that they understood him to promise so much. But never was there given a greater proof of this confidence than at this time. One of the soldiers actually came up and asked to have his wound dressed by the foreign doctor. In this confidence lies one of the surest grounds for hope of future progress.

Then a secretary was sent by the Yamên to interview Sir Claude MacDonald and the other foreign Ministers. He was received outside the front gate, which he was not allowed to enter. It was difficult to find out what was said, but, so far as we could hear, it was nothing of any vast importance. Two accounts of the interview have since been written, both characteristic of their authors; one by M. Pichon dwells on the strangeness of the surroundings. 'C'est un spectacle peu ordinaire. Nous respirons

des bouffées d'air suffocantes dégagées par les détritrus de toute espèce qui emplissent les berges du canal. Le sol est jonché de branches d'arbres, de décombres, et d'immondices. Notre interlocuteur se confond en politesses et en déclarations obséquieuses, s'informe aimablement de notre santé et nous fait part (ô ironie !) des excellentes dispositions de son Gouvernement à notre égard. Nous lui disons que nous en jugerons d'après les facilités qui nous seront données pour remplir nos devoirs diplomatiques et d'après les mesures qui seront prises pour maintenir strictement la cessation du feu. Je lui demande en outre de nous fournir, à mon collègue d'Italie et à moi, les moyens de correspondre avec le Pei T'ang, où nous avons des marins. Il promet d'en référer au Gouvernement chinois. Il exprime des regrets profonds de la Chine à propos de l'assassinat du ministre d'Allemagne et du chancelier de la légation japonaise, "tués par les bandits," ajoute-t-il. On lui fait remarquer que ces bandits sont des soldats chinois.'

Dr. Morrison deals rather with the political and characteristically Chinese aspect of the interview. 'He said that the regrettable occurrences were due to "local banditti," that the Government had great concern to protect the foreigners, that Baron von Ketteler's body had been recovered from the hands of the local banditti who had murdered him, and been enclosed in a valuable coffin. He urged that

the maintenance of foreign troops on the city wall was unnecessary, and that they should be withdrawn. It was pointed out to him that, as we had been very continuously shelled from the city wall, both from the Ha Ta Mên and the Ch'ien Mên, it would be inadvisable to retire. Asked to send copies of the "Peking Gazette," he hesitated for a moment and then stammered that he really had not himself seen the "Peking Gazette" for a long time, but he would inquire and see if they could be bought. He never came back and never sent a "Gazette." His name was Wên Jui. When we did obtain copies of the "Gazette" it was interesting to find two items that must have been especially unpleasant for him to have us know. On June 24, by Imperial decree, leaders were appointed to the Boxers or Patriotic Militia. Among the chiefs was Wên Jui' (see p. 140).

More exciting and more generally useful was a notice posted on the Bell Tower in the course of the day which said:

A Chinaman sent from Peking on June 30 by the Japanese Minister has returned here and reports as follows: He left by the Ch'i Hua Mên on June 30, proceeding to T'ung Chou by boat. He arrived at Tientsin on July 5, but was unable to enter the city, as it was surrounded by Chinese troops. He worked round the city gates and found a large force of Chinese under General Chang, posted north of the railway station commanding a force of Japanese holding the grounds south of the

station. On July 9, General Chang was defeated, and he (the messenger) managed to get through the Japanese lines on July 12 and deliver the Japanese Minister's letter to the Japanese Consul. While in Tientsin he gleaned the following news: that General Nieh was dead, that all missionaries in Tientsin and outlying stations had left for home, and that the Taku Forts were taken by the foreigners without difficulty on June 17. On July 14 the foreign troops took the native city of Tientsin after a two days' attack. On July 15 the messenger left Tientsin for Peking, being escorted by Japanese to the second bridge of boats on the Pei-ho. He returned to Peking by road. Amongst other things he mentioned that the T'ung Chou Taotai had been lodged in the Board of Punishments, and that prior to his own arrival in Tientsin no news of Peking had reached that place since about the end of June.

(Signed) CLAUDE MACDONALD.

Peking, July 18, 1900.

Amongst other things not mentioned in the notice he was said to have reported that 14,000 men—4,000 Japanese, 4,000 Russians, 2,000 British, 1,500 French, 1,500 Americans, 500 Italians, and 500 Germans—had landed at Tientsin, and that 20,000 Japanese were expected to arrive in Tientsin on the 20th, and a force consisting mainly of these troops would then start immediately for our relief. Thus we learnt that relief was then further off than we had thought it to be a month earlier. Yet the general community was delighted at receiving certain news, and, on the whole, the spirits of the besieged were

raised by the hope that this Japanese force might be expected in a week.

On the evening of that day I fell sick and did not resume my diary until the 28th, jotting down then a few of the incidents of the past ten days as they arose in the course of conversation, or were suggested by the notices which at this time covered the boards at the Bell Tower.

During these ten days there was very little fighting ; only an occasional shot flew over the Legation. This was probably due to an edict, which was issued on July 18, commanding the protection of foreigners. The Chinese Government was thoroughly frightened by the capture of Tientsin City, and the gathering of the forces of all nations to the assault, and was already seeking for a way to escape from the vengeance which threatened.

The reason for the fighting between the Chinese and the foreigners,

so the edict was translated,

sprang from a disagreement between the people and the Christian converts. We could but enter upon war when the forts at Taku were taken. Nevertheless, the Government is not willing lightly to break off the friendly relations which have existed. We have repeatedly issued edicts to protect the Ministers of the different countries. We have also ordered the missionaries in the various provinces to be protected. The fighting has not yet become extensive. There are many merchants of the various countries within our dominions. All alike should

be protected. It is ordered that the generals and governors examine carefully where there are merchants or missionaries, and still, according to the provisions of the treaties, protect them without the least carelessness. Last month the Chancellor of the Japanese Legation was killed. This was, indeed, most unexpected. Before this matter was settled, the German Minister was killed. Suddenly meeting this affair caused us deep grief. We ought vigorously to seek the murderer and punish him. Aside from the fighting at Tientsin, the Metropolitan Department and the Governor-General of this Province should command the officers under them to examine what foreigners have been causelessly killed, and what property destroyed, and report the same, that all may be settled together. The vagabonds who have been burning houses, robbing and killing the people these many days, have produced a state of chaos. It is ordered that the Governor-General and the high military officials clearly ascertain the circumstances, and unite in reducing the confusion to order and quiet, and root out the cause of the disturbance. Cause all people to know this edict.

The language of this edict was no stronger than that dated June 17, when the Throne declared that 'all foreign Ministers ought to be really protected,' and Jung Lu was ordered 'to detail his own soldiers,' and energetically use his authority and go immediately to the East Legation Street and the vicinity, and with all his power protect those Ministers. But times had changed since then. An Imperial Edict in China is worth not what it says, but what the commanding officials understand it to mean, and

they enforce or neglect it according to the terms in which it is handed to them and the intention which they understand from other sources that it implies. It is sometimes dangerous to disobey an edict, at other times it is equally dangerous to obey it too literally. At this time the officers were doubtless given to understand that this edict was to be obeyed, and the consequence was that open war, for the time, ceased.

From this cessation of hostilities we not only reaped the benefit of a few quiet days, we also got certain material alleviations of the trials of the siege. Some Chinese brought us, day by day, eggs for sale, hidden under their clothes, and in spite of the story that some of them were beheaded for so doing, they continued to come. This was a great boon. The eggs were limited in quantity, and, as usual with Chinese eggs, of uncertain quality. The Chinese do not like an English dairyman select and label new-laid eggs, fresh eggs, cooking eggs, eggs, they jumble them all together in one basket, and the purchaser takes his chance. But in spite of this they were very welcome. Some of the babies and the sick in the Legation had suffered greatly from confinement and want of proper food, and an egg that would pass muster was of priceless value. I have been told that while I was ill I used to share an egg with a sick baby. Then on two occasions, 20th and 27th, the Yamên sent us a present of fruit, vegetables, and ice, which was a

great treat. Men formed melon clubs, and had solemn meetings in the morning for the discussion of these delicacies with true Epicurean precaution. The luscious gourd was allowed its proper season to cool in the well ; then, brought forth with care, it was duly scooped and seasoned with claret. It was a most superb performance and quite unworthy of the tragic style of a serious and protracted siege. But men did not then want a dramatic famine, they wanted fruit.

This on the one side ; on the other, occasional shots took us by surprise from time to time, and men were wounded one after another—a Russian, an Austrian, an Italian, a Japanese. It was not yet safe to move freely about between the different parts of the defended quarter. The Chinese quietly continued to strengthen and enlarge their barricades. Heavy firing was heard in the direction of the North Cathedral. At this time, anxiety for ourselves being somewhat lessened, men began to think more than ever of the fate of the French Bishop, his converts, and defenders in that place. On July 18 the French Minister had demanded an opportunity of communicating with his fellow-countrymen, but had received no answer. News of their state was scanty and untrustworthy. Rumour reported them hardly bestead ; the sound of firing in that quarter confirmed the report, whilst it

argued that they still held out. None had certain news : hope and fear divided every mind.

Meanwhile a continual stream of letters came to the Ministers from the Tsungli Yamên, all urging them to leave the city and retire to Tientsin, or at least to give up the Christian refugees. To these letters equivocal answers were returned in language of studied moderation, explaining the difficulties of such a course and urging the Chinese Government rather to prove the sincerity of its protestations by restraining its troops from attack direct or indirect, never positively refusing, always finding some insuperable obstacle to compliance, demanding also liberty to communicate with the European Governments. In this way the Ministers hoped to keep the Chinese in a state of perpetual expectation that we should sooner or later surrender ourselves into their hands, and so prevent them from renewing direct attack until the relief force either actually arrived or certain news of its speedy arrival was received. In this they so far succeeded that negotiations continued until the last day of the siege. The Yamên also on July 25 granted them leave to send telegrams to Europe provided that they were not in cypher nor contained any military information. The object of this concession doubtless was that they might further deceive the European Governments with assurances of the safety of the Legations,

and the benignant care of the Chinese for the persons of the Ministers. But in this they were mistaken, for the Ministers declined to send any such message.

On July 27 the Yamên tried to induce the Ministers to abandon the converts to the Boxers by assuring them that Peking was perfectly peaceful, and that, as the converts crowded with us into a small space in the hot weather must be causing us considerable inconvenience and adding to our danger, it would be better to send them away, since they could now move about the city in peace, and could return to their own homes and ordinary occupations. But the Ministers had long since learnt the value of these coolies and labourers, and felt bound by every claim of honour to defend them. They therefore returned answer that, whilst the more serious question of departure for Tientsin was under consideration, occasional shots still reached the Legation and continual firing was heard in the direction of the North Cathedral. They could not therefore understand the assertions of the Yamên that it would be safe for the Christians to leave the Legations, and asked for fuller information.

But the Yamên not only plied the Ministers with their wiles, they also endeavoured to persuade Sir Robert Hart to send out a message which might be twisted into an intimation that the situation at

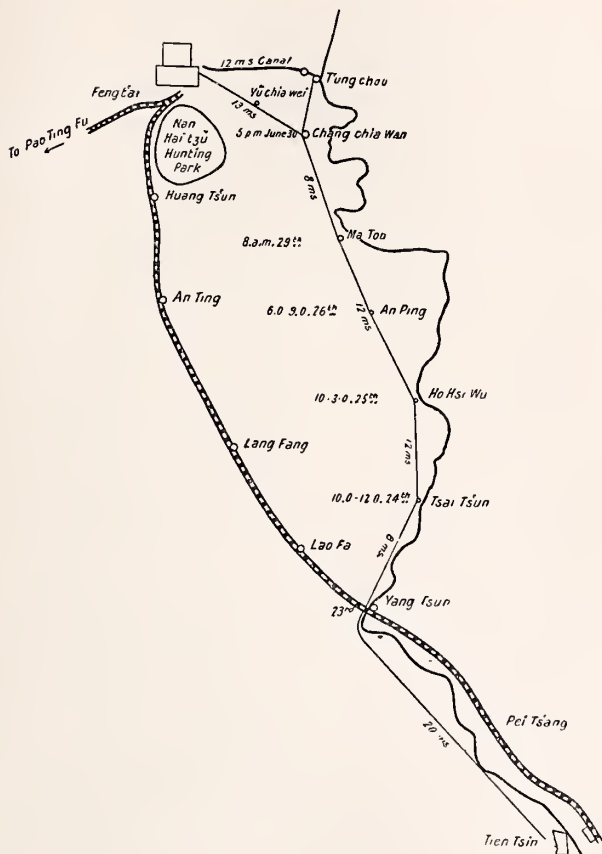
Peking was less serious than was really the case. They expressed great regret that they had received no communication from him for over a month, and said that they had heard that his home had been burnt, and were anxious about his safety. They also asked his advice concerning a despatch which had been received from the Customs Office in Shanghai. To this Sir Robert returned answer that he and all his staff had been driven from their quarters, and had taken refuge in the British Legation; that the records and papers of the Customs had been destroyed, together with all his private property; that one of his staff had been killed, two others wounded, and that under such circumstances he was not in a position to give orders to the staff in the Ports.

Whilst all this grave foolishness was going on, the community was being fed from other sources with vain hopes of speedy relief. On the 24th a messenger brought in 'city talk' to the effect that foreign troops left Tientsin on the 17th, and on the 19th won a battle at Yang Ts'un, and that 150 wounded men had been brought into the city. On the 26th the Japanese began to employ a Chinese of Jung Lu's bodyguard to bring them news, and he continued to supply information of the most encouraging character day by day, until the end of July, when at last we received certain news from the officers of the relief

force. The information given by this man, though utterly worthless in itself, the mere invention of a fraudulent mind, yet was invaluable in the effect which it had upon the spirits of the community. At this time there was more leisure for thought than there had been under the stress of the first attacks. The long and unexpected delay was depressing to people worn by sickness or the monotony of siege fare. Men felt a great longing to escape from all that suspense and turmoil, to break away somehow, to be quit of China and all its intolerable, incomprehensible manners and dangers, to find a quiet spot where in peace and quietness they might pass their days in useful ordinary work unharassed by the ceaseless dread of attack or treachery, and enjoy once more the security and busy progress of the civilised world. The delay was so incomprehensible, so disappointing ! We argued that if in six weeks there had been time to transport a large contingent from the Indian Army to Peking, how much more to send up the few thousand men who were necessary to force their way from Tientsin to the capital. We wearied ourselves in vain. The European Powers believed that we were all massacred ; the officers in command at Tientsin saw no hope of advance until September. Under such circumstances any rumour which supplied food for thought and discussion was of inestimable value. Colonel Shiba's spy, as we called him, did not fail to supply it, for

a consideration. On July 26 he reported that foreign troops had reached Yang Ts'un on the 18th ; on the 24th, between ten and twelve o'clock, a battle had been fought at Ts'ai Ts'un, 30 li (10 miles) south of Ho Hsi Wu, in which 3,000 Boxers and 5,000 soldiers were engaged ; on the 25th the foreign force was at Ho Hsi Wu and engaged the Chinese force from ten till three o'clock, the Chinese losing in killed and wounded 1,200 men. Fresh reports received on the 27th tended to confirm the earlier ones. It was said that T'ung Chou was in a panic, that the Chinese troops were preparing to make a last stand at Chang Chia Wan, four miles south of that city, and that the city itself was being put into a state of defence.

This, then, was the state of affairs when, on July 28, it was reported that a messenger had arrived with a letter from Mr. Carles, the British Consul at Tientsin. There was great excitement, and a small crowd collected at the Bell Tower to await the promulgation of this precious document. Everybody was in the highest spirits and full of hope of good news. Then word was passed from one to another that the letter was not quite so cheering as we had hoped. At last it was posted on the Bell Tower. It ran as follows :—'Your letter of July 4 received ; 24,000 troops landed, and 19,000 at Tientsin. General Gaselee expected at Taku to-morrow. Russians at Pei Ts'ang. Tientsin city



COPY OF PLAN POSTED ON BELL TOWER TO ILLUSTRATE ADVANCE OF
RELIEF FORCES AS DESCRIBED BY 'COLONEL SHIBA'S SPY'

under foreign government. Boxer power exploded here. Plenty of troops on the way if you can keep yourselves in food. Almost all ladies have left Tientsin.' That was a nice sort of letter to send in answer to people who had said that they were hard pressed, and had been expecting relief for six weeks ! It gave us no idea when we might expect to see help arrive, and the messenger who brought it said that he had seen no foreign troops since he left Tientsin. We could not even guess what the letter really meant. How many troops had actually reached Tientsin ? Were they on their way to Peking from Tientsin or from Europe to Tientsin ?

The scene at the Bell Tower was amusing and astonishing. Men could not contain their disgust. That a British Consul should write in such a style astounded us. Who cared whether the ladies had left Tientsin, or what sort of government prevailed in that city of mud huts ? It was maddening. But how should we have felt had Mr. Carles told us the truth, that the officers at Tientsin were at that moment discussing whether it was possible to make any advance until the rainy season was over ? He must have known the wrath that such an epistle would arouse, but he could do nothing better. Wrath and disappointment, with ignorance, were better than wrath and despair. We abused Mr. Carles roundly then ; we know how to thank him now. But

even at the time we could not but feel the ludicrous side of the condition of affairs. Six weeks before we were laying in stores for a fortnight, and that with a sort of shamefacedness at our over-caution. Six weeks had passed and we had still no certain news of relief; ponies were beginning to run short, and we were daily expecting to be put on half rations of fresh meat. An order went forth that day for every household to send in a list of its stores in tea, sugar, white rice, and other luxuries. Hitherto, every household had lived on what it had gathered for itself at the beginning of the siege; only the staples of life—flour, rice, and meat—had been supplied from the general store. At last we were threatened with the general pooling of all stores and the prospect of a ration dealt out per head with no lavish hand. All this showed the opinion of the chiefs. It was vain to put too much confidence in the rumours of relief or relax in any way our preparations for a long siege, and perhaps renewed attack.

Some light is thrown upon the attitude of the Chinese Government at this time by an edict which was afterwards published in the Legation. It was undated, but was probably issued about July 28. It stated that Hsü Ching Ch'êng and Yuan Ch'ang had been denounced as men of bad reputation who in their management of public affairs served their private ends; that they had been guilty of making

wild proposals and had used disrespectful language in their addresses to the Throne; and that their proposals tended to introduce divisions (*i.e.* between the Emperor and the Empress). They were therefore condemned to immediate execution. These two men were progressive members of the Tsungli Yamên, and Hsü in particular was a man peculiarly well informed concerning foreign affairs. He had held office in the Chinese Embassy at Berlin, and had been Minister at St. Petersburg at the time of the Czar's coronation. Since then he had been Director of the Railways in the North. Thus the execution of these men must have been a great blow to the party of conciliation and moderation. It was unlikely that they had committed any more serious offence than the unpardonable one of pointing out the danger of provoking the vengeance of the European Powers.

Moreover, the offensive action of the Chinese had not ceased. On the 29th there was desultory firing from several quarters. The Chinese also persisted in building a barricade across the North Bridge from which to enfilade the canal, and our Marines accordingly fired upon them and tried to break the barricade with the Italian gun. The result was that we killed one or two of the enemy, the Italian gunner received a wound in the hand, and the building proceeded as before. Rumours were still

plentiful and rife. One of the most persistent and most credible was that the Court was making preparations to leave Peking. It was said that the Emperor and Empress proposed to go to Pao Ting Fu and thence to Si An Fu, the capital of Shensi. It seemed only natural that they should do so as soon as foreign troops arrived within striking distance of Peking. But rumours of the force itself were more confused and vague than ever. It was said that a body of foreign troops had been repulsed from Ma T'ou: that was explained as the scouting party of the advanced guard. It was also said that Yang T'sun had been razed to the ground: that was explained as the advance of the main body. It was also said that Li Hung Chang was at Tientsin to negotiate peace. Also that Li Ping Hêng was attacking the North Cathedral with 5,000 troops. Then it was said that a prisoner taken by the French had declared that no foreigners had yet left Tientsin, because, he said, if they had done so the Imperial Guard must have known of it, whereas the troops here had no news of any movements of foreigners northwards. Whence all these rumours came and what they meant no one could tell; we were thrown back on the old uncertainty.

Next day (July 30) we got further news, which was dignified by special notice on the board. At 10 A.M. Colonel Shiba's spy reported that the Chinese

regular army messenger left Chang Chia Wan on the 29th at 8 P.M. He brought news of desultory fighting from 3 till 8 P.M. Many Chinese killed. The foreign army advanced to Ma T'ou at 8 A.M. on the 29th. They had about twenty liang (one liang=500 men). Three cannons were taken from the Ch'ien Mên to the front. He also said that fighting at the North Cathedral was being continued by the Boxers, that the Empress had 200 carts and Tung Fu Hsiang 100, ready to start for the west. At midday a wild and foolish story was set afloat, that about sixty foreigners *armed with sticks* had gone to relieve a Roman Catholic mission station at Chia Chia T'uan, a village eight miles east of T'ung Chou. There were people found to discuss the possibility of there being some truth even in that fable. But about 7 P.M. a far more coherent story was received, said to have originated from two outside coolies employed by a Japanese professor of the T'ung Wên Kuan (a school for interpreters founded some years ago under Imperial auspices, of which Dr. Martin was first President). They reported 'that men from T'ung Chou affirm that the foreign army has fought the Chinese on the 29th just south of Ma T'ou, and that they have seen a man from Chia Chia T'uan who says that foreign troops have come to relieve the Catholics there, and are distant but a mile or so from the entrenchments, letters

having been already exchanged.' Also they reported that the gates of Peking except the Ch'i Hua Mên and P'ing Tsê Mên were ready to be closed, stone and sandbags being piled at the side of the gates ; also that many Boxers had been killed at the North Cathedral ; also that twelve regiments of General Ma's troops had been ordered to Chang Chia Wan. Great expectations were raised by these tales. The general committee gave each of the men a letter to the commander of the foreign troops and offered them large rewards if they returned with an answer. One could not help basing some hope upon these persistent rumours of relief.

About this time the Tsungli Yamên, finding its efforts to induce the Ministers to telegraph *en clair* unavailing, sent a letter to Sir Robert Hart saying that the foreign Governments were very anxious concerning the situation of their Ministers in Peking, and asking him to send a telegram to reassure them. Sir Robert Hart replied : ' If I telegraphed the truth no one would believe me. The only way to make the facts known is to allow the foreign Ministers to communicate with their Governments in cypher. The longer you put that off the worse the situation will get.' It was also said that they enclosed a telegram addressed to Sir Robert from London, but no notice of that was posted until August 1.

Next day Colonel Shiba's spy reported : ' The

foreign troops occupied Chang Chia Wan yesterday evening at 5 P.M., apparently after fighting all the way from Ma T'ou. The Chinese army is now encamped five miles south of T'ung Chou, and fifteen regiments from Ch'ang An, in Shansi (an ancient capital of China), are expected to-day at the Nan Hai-tzū (the Emperor's hunting park just outside the South City), on their way to T'ung Chou.' To this he added strange things—viz., that the five great armies formerly under the command of Jung Lu had been handed over to Li Ping Hêng. This Li Ping Hêng was Governor of Shantung when the trouble arose which ended in the German occupation of Chiao Chou. At that time he wanted to fight the Germans, and swore that he would drive all the foreigners into the sea. He was removed from office at the demand of the Germans, but had been in high favour ever since as a good old conservative. It would, indeed, have been interesting if that man had been chosen as general to make the last stand against the foreign invasion. Then the spy reported that Tung Fu Hsiang had either requested or obtained ten days' leave of absence. That was capable of fifty interpretations—secret service connected with the flight of the Court, unwillingness to assist that flight, jealousy of Li Ping Hêng, despair of the situation, and many others. Finally, the spy asserted that an official

despatch had been received the day before from Chi Nan Fu, capital of Shantung, to the effect that Yuan Shih K'ai was in rebellion, had joined the Germans, and together with them was advancing upon Peking. Before the siege began it was currently reported that Yuan Shih K'ai had rebelled, and it did not seem wholly impossible that he had refused to make any resistance to a German advance into the province. He was a man sufficiently astute to appreciate the folly of attempting to resist the foreigners by force of arms, and sufficiently unscrupulous to make the best terms that he could for himself, regardless of the fate of the country or the dynasty. He had 7,000 foreign-drilled troops under him which were said to be really efficient, well paid, well fed, and well armed, probably the best in North China, and all devoted to him, so that he was in a position to make advantageous terms. So we argued in our ignorance and folly, not knowing that the Germans had never been near Chi Nan Fu.

On Wednesday, August 1, all these reports and rumours came to an end, and we learnt once more the folly of trusting to paid native agents. In the morning Colonel Shiba's spy came in, and reported that the relief force had been driven back from Chang Chia Wan, and had retired upon Ma T'ou. The general committee refused to post that at the Bell Tower on the plea that it was false, really

because they were afraid of depressing the expectations caused by the cheerful stories of the last few days ; but of course the news got abroad, and many of the people who had put faith in Colonel Shiba's informant went about all day with faces as long as walking-sticks. Their sorrow was not lessened by the failure of the egg supply. The man who brought the eggs hidden under his coat was shot by a French sentry, to the great indignation of the community. But their woe was speedily forgotten. In the evening, Colonel Shiba received a letter from Tientsin which put the whole problem on a different footing. The letter was dated Tientsin, July 26, and said that the departure of the troops was delayed by difficulties of transport, 'but advance will be made in two or three days. Will write again as soon as estimated date of arrival at Peking is fixed.' Colonel Shiba's correspondent also said that he had received a note from Peking dated July 22, so that it was clear that the state of affairs in the capital must be well known. This letter explained the alarming report given by the spy in the morning. He had evidently been bringing his imaginary relief force along too fast ; it was already within seventeen miles of Peking ; manifestly he must find some explanation to account for its non-appearance, and obviously the simplest plan was to defeat it, and send it back to Ma T'ou for a few days.

At the same time the following notice was posted at the Bell Tower: 'A somewhat mangled but authentic telegram has been received from London. The telegram is undated, but was sent off probably between the 21st and 24th. It refers to a letter from the Japanese Minister written about June 29, and to a telegram from the American Minister dated July 18, from which it may be inferred that the state of affairs here on the latter date was everywhere known. It also says that the Chinese troops, after severe fighting, were finally routed at Tientsin on the 15th, and that arrangements for our relief were being hastened. It further asks if the Chinese Government are protecting us and supplying provisions.' This was the telegram forwarded to Sir Robert by the Tsungli Yamên on July 30. The last sentence was amusing. The Chinese had protected us in so far that their soldiers had not succeeded in massacring us, and had fed us to the extent of a few melons and bags of flour.

Meanwhile, during these days of comparative peace from open and violent attack, our builders had not been idle. They had strengthened the wall all round the Legation, and made it practically impregnable against shell fire, and had dug a deep trench all down the inside of the west wall to cut any mines which the Chinese might attempt from that quarter. In this they had omitted one spot. The

kitchen of the Students' Mess abutted on the wall of the Carriage Park, and here the trench stopped. It was precisely at this point that the Chinese afterwards mined the Legation. The date at which this mine was dug will always remain a secret known only to its authors; but it was about this time or rather earlier that one of the Customs staff declared that he heard men digging in that quarter and started a counter-mine which was never finished, and which was called 'Wintour's Folly.' It might well have been called by a very different name.

Another 'Folly' was erected about the same time. Herr von Strauch, of the Customs staff, conceived the idea of occupying and barricading the ruins of the houses on the Legation side of the Mongol Market, in order to strengthen our defences at one of our weakest points. It was a long and dangerous task, and kept Mr. Norris and his fellow-builders hard at work for many days. For some time this was considered an unnecessary waste of labour, but when the desultory firing of sharpshooters once more gave place to the organised attack of the regular troops, and the immense value of the new position was proved, men changed their minds and called it 'Von Strauch's Fort.' Soon every post had its name called after some notable personage in the Legation, and men were no longer detailed for duty at such and such a barricade, but at So-and-so's fort.

But for the present we still enjoyed comparative peace, and on Thursday, August 2, a new budget of letters arrived from Tientsin. There was great excitement in the compound. It appeared that a veritable mail had come in. A messenger had arrived bearing no less than six letters, selections from which were speedily posted for the delectation of the community. One addressed to Sir Robert Hart was dated Tientsin, July 28; the author was not named. It said :

Yours of 21st wired home. Keep heart; aid coming early; troops pouring in; enemy at Pei T'sang; Japanese in front, also Russians; very little rain; Yangtse agitated; Liu (*i.e.* Liu K'un I, Viceroy of Liang Chiang) and Chang (*i.e.* Chang Chih Tung, Viceroy of Liang Hu), trying to keep order. Li (*i.e.* Li Hung Chang) at Shanghai; doubtful if coming to Chihli. Tientsin governed by joint foreign commission. Manchuria rising against foreigners; Russian hands full there; Niu-chuang much disturbed; Germany and America both sending 15,000 men. Canton, West River and I-ch'ang threatening; Taylor appointed temporary Inspector-General by Viceroy Liu. Earnestly hope rescue you all.

Another of the same date was from the American Consul at Tientsin, Mr. Ragsdale. He was quite pathetic in his anxiety to express his care for our safety, and mingled prayers with scraps of news in a strange way. 'Had lost all hope of seeing you again,' he wrote. 'Prospect now brighter. We had

thirty days' shelling here and nine days' siege, and thought that bad enough. Scarcely a house escaped damage. Excitement at home intense of course. Advance of all troops to-morrow possible.' Then he added the nominations for the Presidency of the United States of America as the news most important of the outside world and the prayers for our safety aforesaid.

Of the date of July 29 was another letter from Tientsin. The names of both author and addressee were concealed, but it was probably sent to Captain Myers, who was ill in hospital and was opened by his Minister :

Have been trying to reach you since June 21. Foreign settlement relieved June 23. Seymour relieved June 24. Captured East Arsenal June 26, West Arsenal July 10, Tientsin July 14. Will advance in two days. Column 10,000 strong. English, American, and Japanese follow in two days, 40,000 more. Hold on by all means. First column will support and divert enemy from you. There will be eight regiments of United States Infantry, three of Cavalry, and two batteries, United States Marines, and 500 Infantry will be in first column. Enemy strongly entrenched seventeen miles north and at two points further.

It was explained that this message was in cypher and unpunctuated; hence some of the ambiguity, but some at least was due to the carelessness of the writer. It was a veritable puzzle.

Then there were two little extracts dated July 30 :

one from J. S. Mallory, Lieutenant-Colonel, 41st United States Infantry, which said: 'A relief column of 10,000 is on the point of starting for Peking;' the other from Major-General A. R. Chaffee, United States America: 'Arrived here this morning.'

Finally, Mrs. Edward Lowry received a letter from her husband, who was coming up as interpreter with the United States troops. He said: '9th and 14th United States regiments already in Tientsin; 6th Cavalry at Taku on way up. An advance of several regiments already started on its way up. Fighting this A.M. at Pei T'sang. Word came to-day Boxers killing Christians at Ts'un Hua (east of Tang Shan), Shan Hai Kuan, and many other places. Russians and Imperial troops fought at Chin Chou. All property at Pei T'ai Ho (the Tientsin Brighton) destroyed.'

There was plenty of cause both for thankfulness and anxiety in all this, plenty of food, too, for discussion. It appeared that there was imminent danger of a general rising of the people all over China. We feared lest horrors more terrible than any which had yet beset us might at that moment be falling upon the foreign missionaries and native Christians all over the country, in the south as well as in the north, and that the country might then be given over to anarchy. It seemed plain that in many of the provinces the local officials were finding it hard

to maintain order ; we knew that the Boxer and similar associations were widespread, and that their doctrines tended to the destruction of society, and we feared lest the more violent section of the people might seize their opportunity to break down all barriers and involve the whole State in ruin. Moreover, it was clear that the Chinese were fighting as they had never fought before ; that it was no longer a struggle of the foreign Powers against the conservative bigotry of the Chinese Government, but of Western civilisation against the superstitious fears and terrified conviction of the common people that the advance of the foreigners involved slavery for them. When before had an invading army found such difficulty in obtaining transports and coolies ? So long as war was waged by the Government on merely political grounds the people had never realised that they had any real interest in it, and were ready to sell their labour to any one who would pay them. That day, it appeared, had passed away. To defeat the Chinese Government and to enforce treaties so long as the people remained indifferent was not difficult ; to conquer China's millions when urged to resistance by a love of liberty and an inborn clinging to old-established custom and faith, was impossible. We might be rescued, but China was on the verge of a cataclysm the result of which no one could foresee and no one dared to guess. The report

that the Russians were advancing from the north by Chin Chou and Shan Hai Kuan seemed to support the often-repeated rumour that relief might first appear from that quarter. Men argued this way and that without gaining much. The one joyful certainty was that relief was at hand ; we thought that if the column started on July 30 or 31, it must arrive within a week. The only question was whether the rains might delay its progress. We had had during the past few days several heavy storms, and at that time of the year a downpour might be expected at any time which, if it did not make the roads impassable, might yet cause serious delay and entail considerable hardship upon the forces. To this consideration was added some anxiety lest the advance of the foreigners should drive the Chinese in large numbers back into the city, and lest these soldiers, enraged by defeat, should seize the opportunity of assaulting us in overwhelming force in order to wipe us out before the relief party could get in. Happily, the rain did not fall in sufficient quantity to delay the troops, whilst it refreshed us and cooled the atmosphere, and the attack made upon us, though heavy, was not so formidable as to cause us more than a little extra exertion.

We attempted to glean further information from the courier. He was called into Mr. Cockburn's

house and examined by Mr. Hobart. It was an amusing and most interesting picture. The order still was that lights were not to be used more than was absolutely necessary for fear of attracting the enemy's fire. In rooms with windows near to the wall of the Legation no light was used after dark unless with the utmost care. The council then sat in the hall, Mr. Hobart writing at a small table, half a dozen other people grouped round, sitting, standing, or squatting on the floor; the man himself opposite Mr. Cockburn trying to explain what he had remembered or recall what he had forgotten. It was a picture for an artist; but no artist could have reproduced the effect of Mr. Hobart's distinct incisive questions, the man's confused answers, the occasional interruption of one or another who thought he recognised the places mentioned by their local names, often very different from those used in official speech, the general stir whenever it seemed that something of real interest was on the man's tongue. Like all Chinese, he of course did not know what we wanted to be told or why we took interest in many small details which to him had no significance or were matters of course. When his story was all told it amounted to very little or nothing beyond what we had already been told in the despatches. We knew, or thought we knew, the names of one or two Christians who had been killed, and of one or two

houses destroyed in Tientsin. To me the most interesting part of his tale was that which related the difficulties which beset him in getting through the cordon round the Legations after he was in the city. He finally accomplished this by telling one of the soldiers that he knew of hidden silver in the besieged quarter, giving him all the money he had as earnest, and promising to go shares in the profits of the search. The soldier then led him in by his own station.

About the same time we got a fresh supply of 'Peking Gazettes,' abstracts of which were, as usual, posted at the Bell Tower. Two were especially interesting as illustrating the policy of the Government, deceiving itself and trying to deceive others. The first dealt with the action to be taken with regard to native Christians in the country. It explained that

missionaries and merchants have nothing to do with the present war, and . . . instructions have been issued to protect them as usual. At the present time great forces are collecting round the capital, and all officers must make it their duty to protect foreigners. Converts also are the children of the State, but since the quarrel broke out between them and the Boxers they have been occupying villages, digging and entrenching themselves, and throwing up barricades in resistance to the Government troops. Such conduct is equivalent to rebellion, and must be severely dealt with. We remember, however, that they

were actuated by fear of punishment, and if they will repent and reform the net may be opened.

The edict then cites the case of converts at a village called Ta Pao Tien, where Roman Catholic Christians, when called upon by the magistrate, delivered up their arms.

Thus it may be seen that the converts are not all willing evil-doers. Wherever they act as above the local authorities are directed to act leniently, and not put all to death. The bad characters, who call themselves patriotic people (*i.e.* Boxers) and pick quarrels in order to pillage and slay, are to be punished.

It must be remembered in reading these edicts that none but Roman Catholics resisted force with force in the country. This one is interesting as showing the confirmed belief that Christianity was a fault in a Chinese which *must* be punished; but it might be lightly punished if the wrong-doer repented. How contrary this was to all the treaties is very well known.

The second edict was even more characteristic.

Owing to the disturbances caused by people and converts in the neighbourhood of the capital, war broke out. It was a duty to protect the foreign envoys, and the Princes and Ministers of the Tsungli Yamèn addressed frequent letters to them inquiring after their welfare. They also, on account of the difficulty of maintaining complete defence, discussed with them the question of detaching troops to give them safe escort to Tientsin.

We direct the Grand Secretary, Jung Lu, to select in advance trustworthy civil and military officers of high rank to take trustworthy troops, and when the foreign envoys have fixed the date for leaving the city to give them safe escort on the road. *If there are evil-doers who lie in wait to plunder*, these are to be immediately killed. . . . Before the envoys leave the capital, if they have telegrams to send to their countries, provided that they are *en clair*, the Tsungli Yamên is promptly to arrange the matter for them. *This will exhibit the extreme desire of the Throne to treat the people from afar with tenderness.*

As a comment on that edict, the message sent by Sir Claude next day to the commander of the relief force, and through him to Tientsin, is interesting. 'Believe nothing that you hear from Chinese Government. Let nothing delay relief of Peking.' This note was written in Greek characters on a scrap of Japanese paper about three inches long by one and a half inch wide, so that it could be wrapped into the smallest possible space, and either sewn into the sole of the messenger's shoe or plaited into his pig-tail. It was entrusted to the soldier of Jung Lu's bodyguard who for the past week or so had been bringing us all those interesting but lying tales about the advance of the foreign troops. When we at last got authentic news from Tientsin he was questioned, and said that he had concocted the story with the help of two other men, because they were short of money. He was then told that if he got a man to

take a message to Tientsin and bring back an answer, he should be paid 100 taels (about 14*l.* or 15*l.*) for the messenger, and 40 taels (about 5*l.* 10*s.*) for himself. He was delighted, and said that he would certainly do it. So the message was handed to him. It could do no harm if it miscarried, and there was a chance that he might think it worth his while to send it through.

The next week was one of outward quiet, of inward stress and daily expectation. We hoped to hear of the arrival of the forces at any moment, and the strain told heavily on the besieged. No supplies came in either of fruit or eggs. The Christians in the Fu were beginning to feel the pangs of famine; they were fed on a mixture of a little grain, chopped straw, and other fodder, which made a coarse and revolting kind of bread. Besides that, they had the entrails and heads of the ponies killed for the foreigners and a few dogs. The child mortality amongst them was said to be high. As I look back and read again my diary I am surprised at the calmness and quiet tone which was maintained. Hope delayed was doubly hard to bear when there was little going on of an exciting character, and at that time not only were the attacks upon us less furious, but the actual work to be done was less urgent. There was no longer the same demand for sandbags. Hard labour was to be found only in building of

the barricades in the west quarter behind the stable-yard in the ruins occupied by Von Strauch, and which was known as Von Strauch's Fort. Work there was dangerous and exciting, since sharpshooters continued to fire on the builders, and I have heard Mr. Norris recount how bricks were cracked in the hands of the builders as they laid them. For the rest there was only the monotonous round of watches and the quiet work of sick-nursing in the hospital, which to me seemed hardest of all. I cannot refrain from again insisting on the heroic labours of the nurses. Already Miss Lambert had been laid up for several days with sickness brought on by overwork, and Deaconess Ransome was on the verge of collapse; one or two of the others less well known to me were in no better case: yet they held on. In the hospital there was none of the excitement, none of the vigorous labour in the open air which the more sturdy members of the defence enjoyed, only the dull routine, the strain of perpetual standing or stooping over sick-beds, the fearful sights and noisome smells of wounds and sickness. It was wonderful to me that they could persevere with such unfailing zeal, such patient devotion, at such a task, in such an atmosphere.

The Yamèn continued to send messages urging the speedy departure of the Ministers to Tientsin. They added little courteous messages to their

despatches. On August 5 they wrote to condole with the Italian Minister on the death of King Humbert. On August 7 they announced to the British Minister the death of the Duke of Edinburgh. This gave Sir Claude the opportunity of pointing out to them the strange inconsistency which lay between the friendly spirit implied in these messages and the actual situation of the foreign Ministers in Peking, besieged, blockaded, bombarded, cut off from all supplies, and scantily provided with the necessities of life. But more valuable than the opportunity of 'scoring off' the Tsungli Yamên was the permission which the Ministers obtained to send telegrams in cypher to their Governments. As usual, this permission was not openly given, but implied. The Yamên forwarded to Sir Claude a telegram from Lord Salisbury asking after our welfare, and intimated that he should send a 'peaceful answer.' It was concluded from this that cypher telegrams would be accepted, and the Ministers all sent such messages as they pleased explaining the true situation, and the Yamên raised no objection; so that we hoped that at last communication with Europe was restored.

From these signs of relenting on the part of the Chinese government, we gathered fresh hope. There was, indeed, at this time much to encourage us: we had certain news of relief at hand, we had so

strengthened the line of defence as to make it almost impregnable against any such attack as the Chinese had yet made upon us ; we were apparently in direct communication with the European Powers. The only fear that remained was lest the approach of the Relief force should inspire the Chinese to make one final effort to wipe us out at the last moment, and it seemed as if the attitude of the government was inclining to conciliation rather than to violence. The issue hung in the balance. No one knew what would be the end. Few men, I fancy, thought then that we were likely to be overwhelmed ; but many feared lest we might yet suffer heavy losses, and we stood on our guard accordingly, prepared for the worst.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RELIEF: AUGUST 10-14

THE time of our release was now near at hand. We had only to endure a few days of fierce attack. Suspense as to the real movements of the Relief force was speedily removed. About 5 P.M. on August 10 a messenger arrived bearing letters from General Gaselee for Sir Claude MacDonald, and from General Fukushima for Colonel Shiba. We were actually in touch with the Relief force. The portion of General Gaselee's despatch which Sir Claude saw fit to publish was very brief; but it was enough to make the whole community jubilant. It was dated Nan Ts'ai Ts'un, August 8, and said: 'Strong force of allies advancing. Twice defeated enemy. Keep up your spirits.' We did. Everyone went about beaming with delight. Even M. Pichon was satisfied and danced with glee. The extract from Colonel Shiba's letter was longer, but probably not half of the letter was published. It was addressed from the camp at Chang Chiang, about one and a half mile north of Nan Ts'ai Ts'un, and dated August 8:

Japanese and American troops defeated enemy on the 5th near Pei Ts'ang and occupied Yang Ts'un on the 6th. Allied forces, consisting of American, British, and Russians, left Yang Ts'un this morning, and whilst marching north I received your letter at 8 A.M. at a village called Nan Ts'ai Ts'un. It is very gratifying to learn from your letter that the foreign community at Peking are holding on, and believe me that it is the earnest and unanimous desire of the Lieutenant-General and all of us to arrive at Peking as soon as possible, and deliver you from your perilous position. Unless some unforeseen event takes place, the allied troops will be at Ho Hsi Wu on the 9th, at Ma T'ou on the 10th, Chang Chia Wu on the 11th, T'ung Chou on the 12th, probable date of arrival at Peking 13th or 14th.

That was most explicit and encouraging. It was the first news which we had received that the troops had actually left Tientsin, and it spoke of them as probably already more than half way, and evidently expecting to be able to make quiet and steady progress day by day. The messenger added further information which tended still more to encourage us. He was a carpenter, sent out on Monday (6th) with a letter from Sir Claude MacDonald. He said that he first went to T'ung Chou to inquire after his family and heard that they were all either dead or missing. Then on the 7th he met wounded Chinese being brought up the river near a village called Hsiang Ho. At Ts'ai Ts'un he fell in with the advanced guard of the foreign force, and on the 8th he marched with the Middle Division

to Chuan Chiang, a village eighteen li (six miles) south of Ho Hsi Wu. On Thursday, the 9th, he started early with the Middle Division, which expected to reach Ho Hsi Wu that evening (all this in exact accord with Colonel Shiba's letter), but left them in order to hasten to Peking by road. He said that he saw mostly Japanese, a few Russians, and not many English, but a body of black lancers who waved their lances at him and frightened him. He added that the foreigners had not many Chinese servants with them, their baggage being carried on pack animals driven by Japanese coolies. The Chinese, he said, were not making any stubborn resistance, but were being steadily driven back before the advance of the foreigners. When he left them the forces expected to be in Peking in five or six days (again in exact accord with General Fukushima's estimate).

Encouraged by this good news, and full of high hopes, the general committee posted a notice at the Bell Tower offering a prize for designs for a Peking siege medal to be struck as a memorial of this strange experience. There were some three or four designs, one representing the burning of the Ch'ien Mên, one a Marine posted at a barricade, one three figures of Europe, America, and Japan standing hand in hand on the head of a dragon, one a dragon breathing fire upon the Bell Tower, with the

legend 'Ex ore Draconis liberati sumus,' and one or two others which I have forgotten. The motto which took the popular fancy was 'Mene, mene, tekél, upharsin,' but that really was a most unwarranted prophecy. Sir Robert Hart, looking at it, said to me, 'I think "Resurgam" would be nearer the truth.' This little exercise amused the community. No one seemed to think it at all premature, except perhaps a few of the officials, who were more cognisant than the great majority of the strength of the Chinese attack, and who were singularly silent on the subject, treating it with some contempt; but whatever they thought they uttered no word.

The renewed violence of the attacks made upon us at this time by the Chinese troops rather tended to strengthen the general expectation of speedy relief than to depress men's spirits. For the last few days Sir Claude had again and again written to the Yamên to complain of the occasional firing of small bodies of men. This only produced the answer that the attacks were due to mutual misunderstanding, and that the firing was hardly worth a smile, being of much the same character as 'the sounding of the evening drum and the morning bell' by which the temple priests mark the progress of the day—a reply which stirred Sir Claude to write one of his most vigorous despatches. They now gave place to furious attacks. Moreover, new flags

had appeared all round the Legations, and the weapons used against us were of a better class than those which had served to mark time during the armistice. On Saturday, the 11th, the attack on the French and German Legations was said to have been more severe than anything we had yet experienced. On Sunday night, the 12th, they pelted us with a hail of rifle bullets; but our losses were not very heavy—two Frenchmen killed, one wounded. A German was wounded in the left temple, and it was wonderful that he lived, for the doctor took brains and bone out of the wound on the 13th, and the bullet was then supposed to be imbedded in the brain.

In the Mongol Market the attack was exceedingly vigorous, and a Chinese officer was shot trying to lead a charge upon our barricade, about whom rumour reported that he was a man who had engaged to capture the Legations in five days, and that on this, the last day of his term, he was resolved to shame his followers into rushing the place. That was the only occasion, so far as I know, of an officer leading a charge. The word of command in Chinese must be given in the sense 'go' or 'come.' We often heard the command 'go,' we never heard the word 'come.' Perhaps that had a good deal to do with the manifest result that Chinese coolies would 'come' with foreigners into posts of great danger,

whilst they refused to 'go' against our barricades when ordered by their own officers. On August 12, Captain Labrousse was killed in the French Legation, and his loss was greatly deplored. I heard many of the volunteers speak of it. They all seemed to think him a very fine officer.

Meanwhile, the Tsungli Yamên and 'Prince Ch'ing and others,' continued to send letters to Sir Claude MacDonald about this alarming state of affairs, accusing the Chinese converts of provoking it by attacking the troops, to which Sir Claude replied that there were no Chinese Christians armed in the Legations. They wrote again, offering to send an officer to make arrangements for supplying us with provisions, upon which Sir Claude sent a list of the provisions which he deemed necessary. Finally, on August 12 they proposed to call the next day to discuss a preliminary suspension of hostilities, and asked him to fix an hour for the meeting. Some of us supposed that the Chinese had at last come to their senses, and realising that the foreign troops could not be repulsed, were anxious, if possible, to make terms in order to avoid the occupation of the capital. As early as August 8 the Yamên had sent to Sir Claude an intimation that Li Hung Chang had been granted full powers to discuss and arrange all matters by telegraph with the Foreign Offices of all the Powers.

That attempt having failed through the refusal of the Powers to discuss any settlement whilst their Ministers were still besieged, it seemed reasonable that they should now make a last effort to save the situation by direct consultation with the Ministers themselves.

But, as on every other occasion during this wonderful siege, the men of experience were mistaken, for by the time Sir Claude's answer reached the Minister they had already changed their minds, and next day (August 13) returned only a curt note, to the effect that the repeated firing of the besieged was far from being a friendly proceeding, that the Princes and Ministers were busy, and could not come at the hour proposed. Later in the afternoon they again wrote in terms utterly inconsistent with those of the former letter, thanking Sir Claude for his care of the Chinese within the lines of defence, and saying that they wished to propose an agreement 'that, dating from to-day, neither Chinese nor foreigners shall, if possible, again hear the sound of a rifle ;' and, further, that they were preparing to send an officer to buy provisions for the Legations. Incomprehensible audacity, even in Chinese ! All day the firing upon the Legation had been heavy. A shell from one of the guns in the north burst in Sir Claude's dressing-room as he was reading the pacific notes addressed to him by the Yamên.

Towards evening the attack became exceedingly furious. It was the last attempt to force the position, and the firing on all sides was deafening. Again and again the volunteers were called out to support the sentries on watch at the barricades. About 9 P.M. there was a general call to arms, the bell rang furiously; every man not on duty rushed to the Bell Tower, and was given his post. Every weapon in the Legation was handed out. Even Mr. Norris and myself, who had never been armed before, were provided with revolvers. Everyone was prepared for a grand assault. But for the moment our help was not needed; the fortifications stood, the Marines sat firmly behind them and waited for a rush. We had orders to turn out at the sound of the bell. I ran round to the hospital to see if I could be of any use, and remained there till 11 P.M. Then I sat out on the verandah of the house with the deaconesses, who could not sleep because of the deafening noise of the rifles and guns, till midnight.

About midnight it was a little quieter, and I lay down and slept till 2.30 A.M., when, the deaconess came to call me up, saying that the allies were outside the east wall of the city. I got up and found a large part of the community in various stages of undress intent on listening to the boom of heavy guns and the tap, tap, tap, of Maxims. It was a joyful sound, but we were not left to enjoy it in peace. The enemy

renewed the attack with fresh vigour, the air whistled with bullets, the noise made speaking impossible, the bell rang violently and added its clang to the general turmoil. Everyone was out in a minute or two and marched to their posts. With some ten or fifteen others I was sent to wait under the west wall, where the Nordenfeldt had been mounted on a platform known to the community as Fort Cockburn. One by one we were called away to different duties. I was sent into the Mongol Market to act as Von Strauch's scout, and wandered round with him until 5.30 A.M. We found the men everywhere stationed at their barricades motionless, whilst the enemy's fire spent itself wildly on the air. We could hear the shouting of the captains urging on their men, but they could not be induced to charge, and the hurricane gradually died away until it became no more than the ordinary dropping fire to which we were well accustomed. The last effort of the enemy had failed.

I returned and sat up writing my diary and meditating on the wonderful events which had occurred and of the events still more wonderful which might follow the end of the war, and listening to the joyful music of the friendly guns in the east. Day broke, and I watched the poor French people in the great T'ing'rh rise and perform their scanty toilet, hoping that they might soon be

released from that painful life, and find a quiet room somewhere and the bath of which they had been deprived these two months past. Poor folk, one could not but pity them. It was possible then to contemplate these things without anxiety. It was manifest that the attack which we had just met was the last expiring effort of defeated men. We could expect nothing worse. They could not again after that failure attempt to rush the Legation. The worst we should have to suffer would be the irritation of incessant noise, the excitement of an alarm, perhaps the loss of one or two more men, before the siege would be over.

All the morning the conversation ran on the attempt to guess the hour at which the allies would get in. Some thought before noon; others said it would take twenty-four hours to capture the gates. The morning was fairly quiet, and men had leisure to talk and to listen to the sounds of battle waged outside. Some went up to the wall of the city to watch the shelling of the gates. M. Pichon, who did so, has written a little prose lyric in his usual picturesque style on the beauty of the scene: 'Le soleil s'est levé dans un ciel d'azur. L'atmosphère est d'une éclatante limpidité. L'horizon se dégage à perte de vue, on aperçoit la ligne bleue des collines qui se détachent sur un fond clair et doré,' and so on. Probably M. Pichon was the only man

on the wall who had an eye for the beautiful sufficiently keen to notice the appearance of the western hills when the allied forces were coming to our rescue in the east. I was busy all the morning till nearly two o'clock, and then I had just gone to lie down for a short rest after the somewhat scanty sleep of the last night, when suddenly I heard cheering in the compound, and, rushing out, I saw Sikhs coming on to the lawn. Everybody was there, cheering, clapping, waving handkerchiefs, shaking hands. Then came General Gaselee and his Staff, and then more Sikhs and more, until the lawn was fairly covered with them. We were all dancing for joy, and some could scarcely restrain their tears. One or two of the ladies could not appear in public. Men realised then that one hour's joy can efface and outbalance years of trouble and pain.

The cheering and jubilation in the Legation roused the enemy, and they began again a fierce fusillade, but no one except officers on duty paid the least attention to them. One lady was wounded in Chancery Lane just outside the accountant's house,—the only lady who was hit during the whole of the siege. Happily it was only a flesh wound, and she was speedily dressed and sent back to the care of her own people. One little incident alone marred the joy of that hour. As the Indians marched in, after a few moments' rest they were sent off to

support the defence at the barricades. One of these, a Rajput, went down to the fort at the main gate, and, looking through a loophole, was instantly struck by a bullet, which passed through his lip and broke his shoulder. We felt the loss of that man more than if it had been one of our own. It seemed hard that he should have endured the heat and toil of the long march up only to fall the moment he was inside. These were the only casualties. Most of the men were dead tired and lay on the lawn or squatted in the shade of the trees asking for nothing but water and rest. They had started at 2 o'clock A.M. from T'ung Chou, and had marched fourteen miles in the burning heat of a Chinese summer day.

Then we had leisure to ask how they got in, and to hear something of that blazing march from T'ung Chou, of the anxiety of our friends at home, and of the state of affairs in South Africa. But many of us were far too excited to ask coherent questions or to be able to listen quietly to the answers. One of the most interesting facts told us was that we owed our relief that day to the jealousy of the allies. The original intention had been to concentrate outside the city and assault in force the next day; but, owing to the premature advance of a battalion of one of the allied forces, this plan was abandoned and the troops all hurried forward, each on its own path. The Japanese and Russians

attacked the Ch'i Hua Mên, where they met with sturdy resistance and lost a good many men; the British, taking the south road, advanced against the Sha Huo Mên, which they found practically undefended, and, marching straight in, made for the water-gate, to which they had been directed by Sir Claude's last despatch. Soldiers fired at them from the Ha Ta Mên as they crossed the moat, but they got in without loss, the Cavalry being sent on to occupy the Temple of Heaven for the British forces. They thus entered the city some time before any of the other allies.

All the afternoon the troops came pouring in—Sikhs, Welsh Fusiliers, Bengal Lancers, baggage mules, in endless succession. One could not but recall the scene in the same compound two months before. What a contrast there was between the entrance of this force and the rush of that poor company of refugees on June 20! The confusion was as great or greater, but how different were the feelings with which we watched the arrivals! Then all were flying in terror before a conquering foe: now each new troop was the sign and assurance of victory and deliverance. About 5 P.M. a company of Americans marched in with colours flying. They had entered by the Tung Pien Mên, and thence had made their way to the Ch'ien Mên. Mr. Squiers, who was on the wall, seeing the Chinese leaving their barricade, had followed

them up with a small body of men, drove them past the Ch'ien Mên, and opened the gate to his own forces.

That same afternoon the Sikhs went out to clear the surroundings of the Legation. They entered the Mongol Market and drove out the enemy, who had been giving us so much trouble for the last week, killing a good many of them. They blew down the wall of the Carriage Park, and seized the halls there for their own quarters. It was with strange feelings that we heard the explosion which broke down the defences which we had been labouring with such care to keep up ; it seemed as if it really could not be safe to open that wall. It was very interesting to experience that conflict of intellectual conviction with instinct. In spite of the visible proof of deliverance, it was impossible to realise that the danger of attack was over, and that we could destroy our defences and once more sleep in peace without being roused by the clang of the alarm bell. 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then were we like unto them that dream.' That expression of the Psalmist received a new meaning for most of us. 'The Lord hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice.' That night the American missionaries ended their concert with the Doxology, and we all joined in. The siege was over. It only remained to return thanks.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONVOY : AUGUST 15-27

It was with strange feelings that we rose on the morning of August 15. In twenty-four hours the whole aspect of the Legation had been changed, and the moral atmosphere was as changed as the outward aspect. The crowd had been great before, but by long residence it had become settled and orderly. Then each one had his own place, his own work ; people moved to and fro quietly, or collected at the Bell Tower in animated groups to discuss the latest news or probabilities. But now the whole place was in a turmoil. Officers on horseback, parties of Lancers, companies of Infantry, guns, ammunition waggons, baggage trains, carts, filled all the ways. The lawn was crowded with soldiers and civilians, every corner packed with camp-followers and coolies. There was no room to move where everyone was moving. There was no longer the regular routine of watch and other duties for the besieged. The daily ration of flour, rice, and horseflesh to which we had grown accustomed ceased ;

everyone had to forage for himself. We had hoped that the arrival of the relief force would restore order and bring us plentiful supplies. For the moment it seemed as if confusion was worse confounded, and supplies more scanty and difficult than ever. All day crowds were pressing in, troops of every description—Indians, Chinese from Wei Hai Wei delighted to see active service and boasting of their losses, Welsh Fusiliers, Americans, men from the ‘Terrible’ with their Ladysmith gun. All day crowds were pressing out to clear the Tartar City, to capture the Imperial City, to guard the Palace, in jealous fear lest any other nation should be first to win places of importance. It was said that the Court had fled towards the west at the moment when the allies entered. The Japanese were working their way round the north of the Imperial City to the Hou Mên, the Americans and French were shelling the entrance to the Palace from the south by the Ch’ien Mên. Already many of the refugees were busy packing up and preparing to return to their own Legations; already men in small parties were beginning to go out in search of loot. Only the hospital remained the same, and even there, in the bomb-proof shelter just outside, a large party of Japanese coolies had taken up their quarters and spent their time gambling and selling silk and silver ornaments which they had picked up somehow.

But the attention of most men was bent in eager anticipation on hearing of the relief of the North Cathedral. The evening before poor old Father Adosio had ridden off on a donkey and had been killed. Father Adosio was a man of most striking appearance. Though he was not really of great age, his tall bowed figure, his snow-white hair and beard, his great Jewish nose and shrunken cheeks, made him the very model of an aged patriarch. It was said that before the siege he had been taken prisoner by the Boxers and had adjured them by his white hairs to spare his life, saying that it was contrary to their religion, to all their ideas of right, to injure so old a man, and that they had at once recognised the justice of his appeal and had released him. He had survived the siege : he fell on the day of release. Why he went no one knew ; whether it was in indignation and grief at the sluggish movements of the French troops, which did not at once hurry to the support of their countrymen, whether it was in ignorance, supposing that the city was safe so soon as the allies entered, whether it was in eager zeal to be the first to bring his friends news of the taking of the city, or whether the joy and excitement of relief had broken down a mind worn with the overstrain of long weeks of trouble and anxiety, no one could tell. All that was known was that he had gone and had perished. Indeed, it seemed a strange thing that

the relief of that hardly beset garrison of priests, Marines, and converts was left to the zeal and energy of heathen soldiers. The Pei T'ang was first reached by the Japanese from the north, and the French soldiers only arrived in time to join in the rejoicings of the rescued Christians.

Thus things continued for the next two or three days—on all sides fighting, burning, settling into quarters, foraging, looting. The scene from the Tartar Wall on the night of the 15th was most weird and fascinating. Rain had fallen during the day and the evening was dark and cloudy. At the foot of the wall beside the canal the American troops were bivouacking for the night, and the innumerable fires of wood, at which they were cooking their evening meal, made bright spots of light, by which the dim figures of the coolies could just be seen crouching over the fires or running to and fro, whilst the soldiers squatted about in groups on the fringe of light, where the blaze of one fire died away and touched the border of the next. About a mile to the east the outer gate of the Ha Ta Mên was in full blaze, a second edition of the great Ch'ien Mên fire seen at a greater distance—a huge grille full of bright yellow flames. Away to the south the Sha Huo Mên was burning itself out and made a faint glow; on the north-east there were two large fires which I guessed to be the Ch'i Hua Mên and the Tung Chih Mên,

but they were too far away to be certainly located on such a dark night. Directly to the north, behind the coal hill which showed up clearly against the light, the Hou Mên was pouring up a great sheet of flame to heaven. In the west all was dark and still, but the brilliancy of the fires in the east was sufficient to half reveal the outlines of the larger buildings.

In the Carriage Park next day was a scene very different, but equally interesting. There the Field Hospital and the various troops were taking up their quarters in the large halls, dim, cool, and dusty, in which had been stored the Emperor's elephant chariots and State sedans. These had all been dragged into the open, and the soldiers were busy clearing away the dust of ages. One passed out of one group which was purely Indian into another purely Chinese, again into one distinctly British, meeting dhoolies, Chinese sedans, baggage mules in long strings led by Indians dressed in every type of turban, coolies with Chinese carrying poles, coolies with water-skins, coolies with chatties on their heads. Further on were great chariots, huge cumbrous things with thick wheels and four shafts, like roof timbers, for two elephants abreast, a cupola roof lined inside with rich yellow silk embroidery, and a throne beneath, where the solitary image of Imperial Majesty sat in dismal obscurity. The elephants

had long been dead and their stables in the south-west corner of the city had been in ruins for many years, and these great chariots lay stowed away in the dusty halls, useless and unseen. The spirits of a dying age seemed to hover over these monuments of past magnificence. They represented ideas of society and government with which the present has little sympathy and which are already, even in the Far East, giving way to newer and more enlightened manners.

There was a good deal of jealousy amongst the allies, and many were found to prophesy that they could not remain long together without strife. On August 16 I went into the hospital to see the Japanese Marines. They could not speak English well enough to explain any connected argument, only a word or two, helped out with signs. They were evidently full of the idea that a quarrel was at hand. They put up one finger of the right hand and said 'English man,' then another and said 'Japan man.' Then one finger of the left hand 'Russian man,' and then dashed the two hands together and laughed with glee. I shook my head, put up only one finger of each hand, 'Japan man, Russian man,' and struck them together, then clapping my hands I cried, 'Good Japan,' and said, 'This English man.' They were highly amused, and nodded their heads, laughing hugely. Those who had come up with

the allies said that if anything would stave off open strife it would be the impression created by the conduct of the Japanese throughout the campaign. Everybody was full of praise of their dash and courage and capacity for long and rapid marches. The Japanese, on the other hand, seemed to have learnt to despise the Russians.

On the afternoon of August 17, Mr. Norris and I went over to visit our old mission compound. We found a heap of ruins. The wall was broken down and the whole place levelled with the ground. It was a field of broken bricks, in which it was difficult even to trace the ground plan of the houses. The well had been filled up, a dead body was rotting in the drain. Nothing remained standing save parts of the walls of the clergy school and of the girls' school. Not a tree, not a stick, not a shrub survived. It was a howling wilderness. A few of the neighbours' houses, and those the worst, were untouched, and the people came out with hypocritical friendliness to welcome us back, offering us tea and such-like tokens of goodwill. It was not difficult to guess why they had suffered no harm. We went into the houses on the chance of finding some scrap of our belongings to take away as a memento, but of course found none. We went into the great pawnshop, in which all our Christians had deposited their treasures for safe keeping; it was deserted, looted,

empty, and bare. Nothing remained except heaps of paper, account books, pawntickets, and such-like rubbish.

On the way home we met a large party of American missionaries out in search of quarters for their Christians. The common plan was for the foreigners to take one of the large deserted compounds belonging to the nobles or wealthy Chinese and encamp there with their converts. We saw very little looting, a few Americans with silver, but nothing more disgusting than the robbing of two peaceable, well-dressed men by Russian soldiers. The Russians simply made them undo their girdles and hold up their tunics whilst they felt all round their waists for watches or money—mere highway robbery. That was a trifle, but it made an honest man feel cross. The stories that were told of atrocities committed in the city made one's blood boil. How far they were true it was difficult to tell; some of them were certainly true, but this is not the place to repeat them.

In the British Legation no soldier was supposed to have private loot. Foraging parties went out under the command of an officer and brought in quantities of silk, furs, china, silver plate, and ornaments of all kinds, and this was sold by public auction every evening for the benefit of the soldiers. People expected to get away quickly, and prices for the

most part ruled high. Consequently, some preferred to buy silk and fur and ornaments direct from the soldiers ; but it was open to question whether that was justifiable whilst private loot was forbidden. However, it was better than giving way without restraint to the lust for getting which seized some of the refugees, who went out with carts and collected what they could find. In this way men of judgment secured much valuable property at the expense of their consciences.

In the city the common people used every means to protect their houses. The Mohammedans, seeing the turbans of the Indian troops, promptly adopted that costume, which they do not ordinarily wear in the streets. Nearly every house put up a little flag proclaiming that the inhabitants were the obedient subjects of one of the Allied Powers. The name of Japan, being most familiar, and written in Chinese characters, was the most common. Some copied the letters U.S.A., often upside down ; some got friends who knew a little English to write them a legend. Several of these were amusing. ‘Most noble great man, sir, I hope you will not kill us ; we are all good men here.’ I heard of one man at whose door was a placard covered with a lot of unintelligible characters. When asked what they meant, he said that he did not know, he had copied them off a Japanese match-box. The people put up anything which they hoped

might propitiate and keep out the foreign soldiery. There were doubtless many other inscriptions more curious still.

But the number of people left in the city seemed very small compared with its former busy throngs. One passed through street after street of apparently deserted houses. Scarcely a soul was to be seen in the great streets except the small gangs of coolies whom the officers impressed to clear the road. I was at some pains to inquire from those best able to judge what proportion of the population remained. The estimates varied from two-thirds to one-twelfth, but the general opinion, and probably a fairly true one, was about one-quarter. It was a misery to walk the city and see its desolation. It had been twice looted before, by the Boxers, and by the Imperial soldiers, and now it was looted again by the allies. At each fresh step in the tragedy multitudes had fled to places where they hoped to find greater peace and safety. Now it seemed a ruin, the restoration of which could only be accomplished, if it were accomplished at all, after a long lapse of time. Peking was not like one of the great natural centres of trade, which recover as if by magic from terrible disasters under the influence of renewed commercial life. It was simply the fortified home of the Court, which had attracted to itself the crowds which always gather round Courts to supply their wants and luxuries. The

moment the Court left, it must sink to the level of a second-class market town.

On the evening of August 17 a notice was sent round to collect the names of all those who wished to travel to Tientsin by the first convoy, which was expected to leave on Monday, the 20th, and people began to collect their goods together. Very few had much luggage. They had come into the Legation in haste, leaving all their property behind, and that had been lost, stolen, or destroyed. They had only the clothes which they had brought with them, so that packing was not an arduous task. Most people were anxious to get away, and wondered that the convoy had been so long delayed. They had a sort of idea that we should be sent off the day after the forces marched in. But transport was difficult to arrange, and the hour for departure was not yet.

August 19 was a Sunday, and all the besieged met together at 9 A.M. outside the chapel in the Broadway leading from the Bell Tower to the Great Gate to return thanks for our deliverance. We sang a few hymns and the *Te Deum*, and Mr. Norris read some appropriate prayers, and then Dr. Arthur Smith, the learned author of 'Chinese Characteristics,' delivered an address, in which he summed up the events of the siege, in which the protection of our God was most manifest. It was not a difficult

task to find many such, and he might have spoken for hours without exhausting his topic. As it was, in the brief time which was allowed he made out a formidable list of events which tended to our safety, and all of which were sufficiently singular to challenge the attention of the most thoughtless. Unhappily, he rather took the services of the Marine guards for granted, and these men, who were in high spirits and had suffered much during the siege, felt somewhat indignant, and could not restrain their feelings. It was almost amusing to hear their comments when the service was over, which all amounted to, 'And where do I come in?' It emphasised the mistake of neglecting the natural in filial recognition of the supernatural. The supernatural over-watching care of God ordering events for His good purpose is commonly revealed through the success of the natural care of men for themselves, and is best expressed by the manifest truth that all the care and labour of men would obviously have been in vain if the favour of God had not aided their efforts. And never before in the lives of those present had that truth been more unmistakably proved.

In the afternoon there was a great raid upon an arsenal which had been discovered a little way to the north of the British Legation. The discovery of this arsenal brought out into the clearest prominence the fact that the Chinese had not used their utmost

powers to take the Legations by force. We had supposed during the siege that the enemy had very few foreign guns, yet here there were plenty of new guns and ammunition untouched. During the siege we had often observed that the troops attacking us were using old-fashioned weapons and even gingals, huge two-man guns, which fired a large solid bullet, and blunderbusses, yet' here were abundance of the latest type of foreign rifles. With these weapons, carefully handled, they could have made the attack far more serious than it actually was, yet they refrained. Why, it remains to be found out. Here, too, was another proof of the fact which the allied forces had discovered at every step of their journey, that for a long time past the Chinese Government had been laying in vast stores of weapons and ammunition without any foreigner having noticed the slightest sign of it. It is probably true that arms of this description have been gathered into secret arsenals all over the country in preparation against the day of need.

An event which occurred on Monday, August 20, revealed the spirit of the foe against whom we had to fight. It had been rumoured that a strong force of Boxers was in the Imperial Hunting Park, to the south of the city, and some Lancers went out to make a reconnaissance. A small body of the enemy, armed only with swords and spears, met them in the

open plain, and made such a furious attack on them that the horses, terrified at their wild shouts and brandished weapons, refused to face them, and the Lancers had to wait for a Maxim gun to clear the way for their charge. The Boxer, inflamed with fanatic zeal, is almost as mad as a Dervish. One of them, it was said, though pierced right through the body, yet struggled free and renewed the attack. Such conduct was unknown in the Japanese war, and probably had not been seen since the rising of the T'ai P'ings. It was only another proof that the Chinese can fight and will fight, in his own cause, whilst he will not fight when led by officers in whom he reposes no trust, in a cause which he does not understand. It is one thing to fight the Government troops on a question in which the people feel no interest, even though it may vitally affect them, another to fight the people led by their own leaders in a cause which every man feels to be his own.

The days were now filled up, for those who were not consumed with lust for loot, in visiting spots generally closed to Europeans. It was possible to visit the Palace gardens, with their beautiful lakes covered with lotus flowers, the coal hill, and the pagodas in the grounds, and, above all, the Altar of Heaven. The surpassing beauty of these spots was a revelation to those who had never seen more of Peking than its dusty and crowded streets. To walk

in the enclosure of the Temple of Heaven made one feel that to live in such a place, to be able to stroll at will through its quiet groves or over its green grassy plain, would make residence in Peking a delight. We passed through great parks, over ornamental bridges, through delightful shady groves of cypress, into quadrangles containing splendid halls and temples. In the outer courts there was indeed some disorder, for the Sikhs were quartered there and the halls were littered with loot, valuable and worthless piled in strange confused heaps. We longed for a skilled and learned man to turn them over and pick out the invaluable and priceless from the rubbish, and so save from destruction what else must inevitably perish. But when we were once inside the inner enclosure apart from the crowd, alone in peace, our admiration was boundless. Most striking and impressive of all was the great circular altar, ascended by its triple flight of nine steps, ninety feet in diameter, it is said, at the top, built of pure white marble. This in its beautiful solitary simplicity, without roof, without ornament of any kind, without any furniture except the great incense-pots made by Ch'ien Lung (1736-1796), with no building of any kind in the same enclosure, except the small furnace where the whole burnt sacrifice is offered once a year, and in which we saw the white charred bones of the last sacrifice; this altar, standing so alone, so

free from the finicking ornamentation of which one wearies in China, has a dignity and a solemnity which make it worthy to be the central place of a nation's worship. As we stood there, with nothing but the blue sky above us, the world and its turmoil shut out by a triple barrier of blue-tiled wall, the grove, the park, we felt the solemnity of a place designed to force man to turn his whole attention to the sky. If only the Chinese perform their functions reverently, which it is to be feared they do not, to see the Emperor, the High Priest of his people, the Son of Heaven, ascend that altar in state must be a singularly impressive spectacle. The mere existence of such a place, of such a ceremony, is a convincing proof of the capacity of the Chinese mind for true religious feeling, and throws into horrid contrast the temples, Taoist or Buddhist, full of tawdry ornaments and hideous idols. The same people offer a worship in which Dr. Martineau might have joined with perfect content, and bow down before a degrading superstition in which none higher in order of thought than a savage could find it possible to share. Li Hung Chang and many others have frequently done so—worshipped Heaven in that pure simplicity in Peking and grovelled before a worm to entreat for rain in a season of drought. Strangely enough, at the foot of the altar we picked up the shattered pieces of one of the sacrificial vessels—a significant sign—the symbol

of the change which must come. The altar remains, the worship of the God of Heaven, the knowledge of Whom must cover the earth as the waters cover the sea ; the vessels depart, the old mistaken forms and ideas vanish away, for the old order is changed.

Then we wandered through the grove to the high triple-roofed temple called the ' Altar of Prayer for a Good Harvest,' which in English pictures is generally described as the Temple of Heaven, a magnificent building based on great pillars of wood so massive as to remind us of those in Durham Cathedral, only of course the red paint figured with gold produced a very different effect from the solid stone columns of the Cathedral. From the marble terrace which surrounds the Temple we had a magnificent view of the city, but then in ruins and flames. As we looked, the Hsi Chih Mên and several other buildings were sending up their columns of smoke to Heaven. But on the day of its first glory one could fancy the Emperor walking there to contemplate the beauty of his city set in the midst of that rich plain, surrounded with its ring of hills, and saying in his heart, like Nebuchadnezzar: ' Is not this great Peking, which I have built by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty ? '

That evening it came on to rain, which continued steadily till midnight. Consequently, the convoy, which we had expected to start next day, was again

delayed. In the morning Sergeant Herring went to visit the foreign cemetery outside the Hsi Pien Mên, and returned with the news that the wall had been destroyed, the trees cut down, the tombstones broken, the graves rifled, the place utterly laid waste. 'I can tell the graves, sir; I can't recognise men's bones,' he said. No one was surprised, but every one was grieved, and some were exasperated.

Next day, August 23, we were called at 5 A.M., and actually left the compound at 6.30. There were about eighty people in the convoy, nearly all travelling in Peking carts, one or two in chairs, whilst a few dhoolies borne by Indian coolies followed in case any one fell sick by the way. It was a lovely day but very hot, and we did the journey to T'ung Chou in pretty good time considering the number of the carts. The roads were good except in places, especially those places which were paved in Chinese fashion with huge blocks of stone and had been allowed to go to ruin. A road of this sort baffles description. Travellers may, and often do, exaggerate the difficulties of journeys in China, but this road has and never can be exaggerated. The only wonder is how ever the Peking cart can manage to hold together. Two or three in our convoy were overturned, but nothing worse resulted than the covering of the baggage with mud.

On the way we passed villages and scattered

farms, all absolutely deserted. The crops were ripening in the fields, but there was no one to look after them or to reap them. They were left to rot. At a season when in ordinary years the country is alive with busy folk, when every field has its watcher's booth, when every threshing-floor is rolled afresh, and men, women, and children, all turn out to bring in the harvest, now not a soul was to be seen. We went into house after house, broken cups and plates lay upon the floor, an evil stench warned the intruder from corners, the water from the wells had a strange taste savouring of disease and death. 'Where can the people all be?' we asked. They could not all be dead. Doubtless many of them were hiding in the crops from fear of the foreign invasion. The inevitable result was plain—famine and nakedness in the coming winter. It chilled one's blood to think of the misery which must ensue for these poor folk.

When we reached T'ung Chou about 1.30 the sight that met us was even more terrible; we thought that we had seen ruin and destruction enough in Peking, but we had seen nothing to compare with T'ung Chou. The havoc wrought by war was appalling. The city had been sacked by the Russians: the gates were destroyed; the main street a mass of *débris*. In Peking the Chinese had carried off every stick, every stone which could be

used for any purpose. Here all was left as it had been destroyed. Fires still smouldered on every side. Even to enter some of the temples and houses was dangerous lest the charred timbers should fall at the least movement. In our journey across the city I saw only two Chinese standing at a place where two ways met, and they were probably in the service of the foreign soldiers.

We were glad to leave the place behind us, and to find ourselves upon the river bank. Here were a number of grain boats on which had been erected a shelter of matting. Each boat was to take four or five foreigners, their servants, and four Beloochis as guard. Our party, consisting of the two deaconesses, their Chinese charges, a servant, and myself, were happy enough in getting a boat to ourselves. The deaconesses and the Chinese women slept in the mat-shed, and I lay outside with the Beloochis. We were all on board by three o'clock, and I expected to start at once and accomplish one stage of the journey before nightfall, but the order was that we were not to leave until five o'clock the next morning. Meanwhile we got provisions. The Army Commissariat provided us with four days' rations of biscuit, tinned beef, tea, salt, jam, and best of all, potatoes, a luxury which we had not seen for a long time. That, with the stores which we had laid up for ourselves, would have

kept us well supplied for a week. Then we waited about, grumbling a little at the delay, but glad to be on the way home, free from the horrors of Peking.

It was quite chilly at night on the open boat, and it seemed long before day broke, and then delay followed delay, so that we did not start until 8 A.M. The boats were beached high, and some of them could not be easily got off, and coolies were scarce, so that they had to be shoved into deeper water one by one, and some were a long way ahead before the last had started. The boatmen were for the most part raw coolies; only a few seemed to be capable of managing the boats, and there was a general disagreement as to the course. The river was shallow and full of shoals, so that one after another ran aground, and was got off again with difficulty. Thus we kept passing and repassing one another, each mocking the other's bad management, only to find himself in a similar fix a few yards further down the river. There were no orders to keep the boats together, no one in supreme command to direct the crowd. The boats with the best boatmen or the lightest draught speedily forged ahead, and the convoy was scattered and divided by great distances; often we floated along with no other boat in sight, or perhaps only a shadow of one a mile or so away. One could not help thinking how simple a thing it would have been for an enterprising enemy to have cut

that convoy to pieces. The crops grew thick right down to the water's edge. The great millet, which we call kao liang, the traders sorghum, grows to a height of twelve or sixteen feet, and forms dense and impenetrable cover. Half a dozen men hidden in the crops might have picked off the Beloochi guards as the boats passed in the middle of the river without our being able to fire a shot in reply. The enemy would have been invisible. He had only to move a few yards and lie down, and then a body of men might have searched for him for hours in vain. The boats, scattered as they were, could not have supported one another. Those in front would scarcely have heard the sound of the shots; if they had, they could not have turned back. But happily we had not to deal with any such foe. The boats glided gently down stream, and we sat on deck, and let the quiet motion, the stillness of the atmosphere, the beautiful lights on the water, work their soothing effect upon our minds.

All the way down the river we saw the same sights that we had seen on the road to T'ung Chou. Where there used to be crowds of busy, inquisitive, greedy Chinese, there was now not a living soul. We passed little camps of French soldiers posted to keep open communication with the north; we saw a few coolies working reluctantly and at high pay for them; we saw no workmen in the fields, no

boats laden with rice or copper for the Chinese market. The foreigners seemed to be the only people in a land of deserted wealth. We saw also signs of war only too frequently—villages in flames, dead bodies floating down the river or stranded on the banks. We shuddered to think of the deeds committed by Christian troops and of the effect which they must have upon the Chinese, and of the undying hatred which was being planted with ever-deeper and stronger roots in their minds.

At nightfall we all tied up together against the banks, and the quiet of the day ended in a Babel of voices, the shouting of boatmen, the greetings of friends separated since morning. Often the last boat did not arrive until 10 or 11 P.M. Happily, the weather was fine, and the frail mat-sheds were not put to the test of heavy rain. The American convoy, which started on August 21, was less fortunate; they were caught in the heavy rain which delayed our departure for a day, their boats were flooded, and they spent that night in great discomfort.

Thus we journeyed until Sunday night. We had hoped to reach Tientsin that day, but had made slow progress, and at 11 P.M. we found the convoy anchored against the bank, and we laid up beside it, expecting to start next morning about 5 A.M. However, about two o'clock the boat next to us stirred, and raised such a fearful stench from the bottom of

the river that it was impossible to remain where we were, and we had to move away; and when we were once started the beauty of the night and the expectation of surprising our friends in Tientsin were irresistible, and I ordered the boatmen to let her drift. We were then close to Tientsin; we found the bridges of boats above the city open, and slid quietly down the stream. There was no moon, but it was one of those lovely starlight nights which we enjoy in North China, and we could see the course of the river perfectly clearly, all the buildings on either side being half-revealed, half-hidden in a beautiful soft white light. The stars were reflected in splashes of gold on the dark water, and the morning star, which shone with a splendid brilliancy, cast a long stream of light on the river like a little moon. The shadows of the buildings on the banks were clear cut upon the water as in England only the moon can cast them. We moved in perfect silence; only a ripple seemed to make the universal stillness more profound. When we reached the junction of the Grand Canal with the Peiho, where stood the great Roman Catholic Cathedral, only the west front and tower were standing, and cast a long shadow on the water. It was difficult at first to distinguish where substance ended and the shadow began, so that the tower appeared double its real height; and when we got directly opposite to it

the starlight shone through the empty doorway and windows and crowned it with the tenderest light, softening all harsh outlines, hiding all the horrors of destruction, glorifying the squalor of its sordid surroundings in soft mystery. We were in raptures. If Scott had lived in North China he would have wished to see Melrose by starlight.

Thence we drifted to the great bridge of boats above the station, which was closed, so we anchored and waited for the dawn. Slowly the day broke, chill and grey. Crowds of French soldiers were passing the bridge by the light of great torches made of dried kao liang stalks. It seemed as if we might wait for ever. At last they were all over. Still the keepers of the bridge showed no sign of opening a way for us; then suddenly I perceived that we were dragging our anchor, and steadily forging down upon the closed bridge. I pointed this out to the sentry, and in a few minutes the bridge was opened, and with difficulty, for the current was very strong, we struggled through.

So we arrived about 7 o'clock A.M., made our way to the Mission, greeted our friends, and, going into the little church together, returned thanks to Almighty God.

TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER

*Nature Christian
 comprising one another in
 the earth p. 67 &c.*

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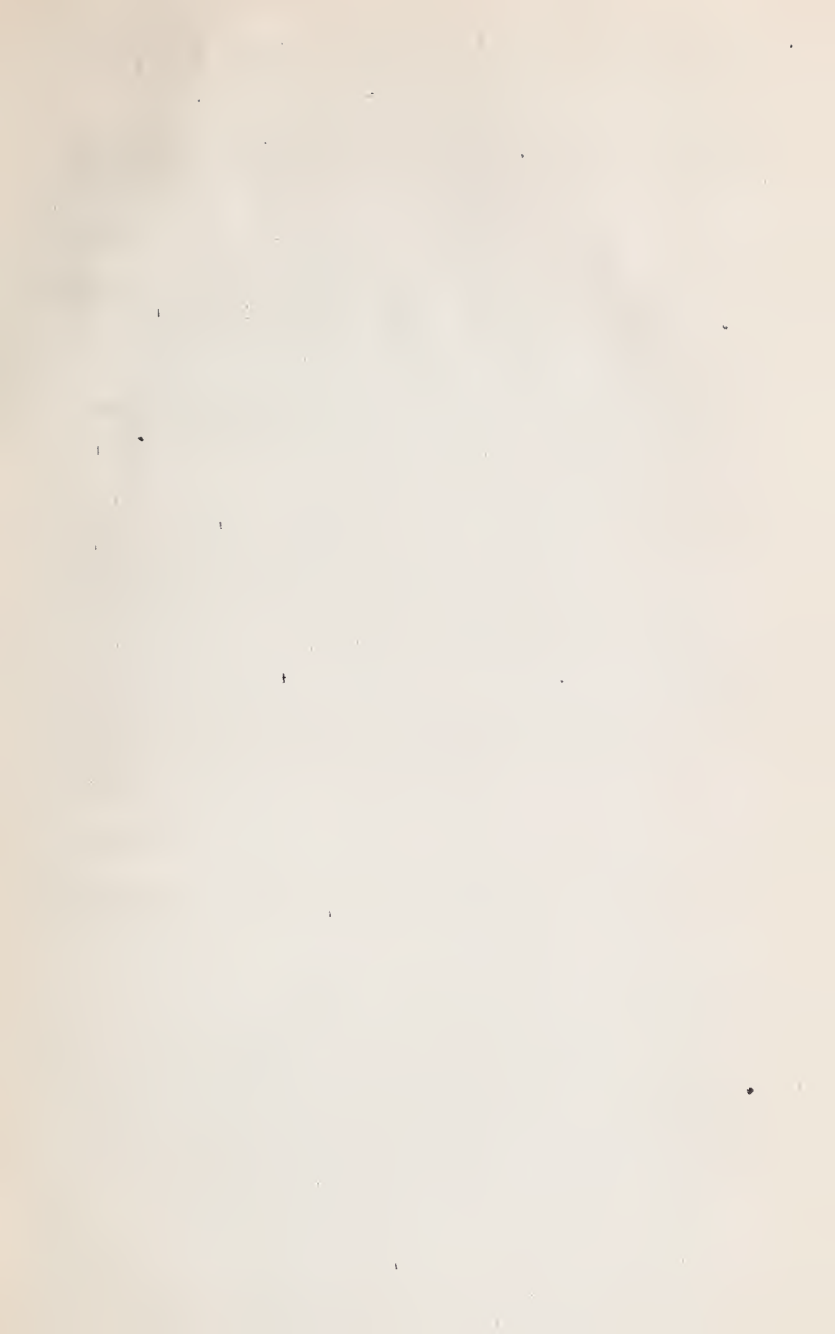
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